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DECEMBER 2014

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TARARUA MONOPOLY

One trumper's quest to own the range's best huts

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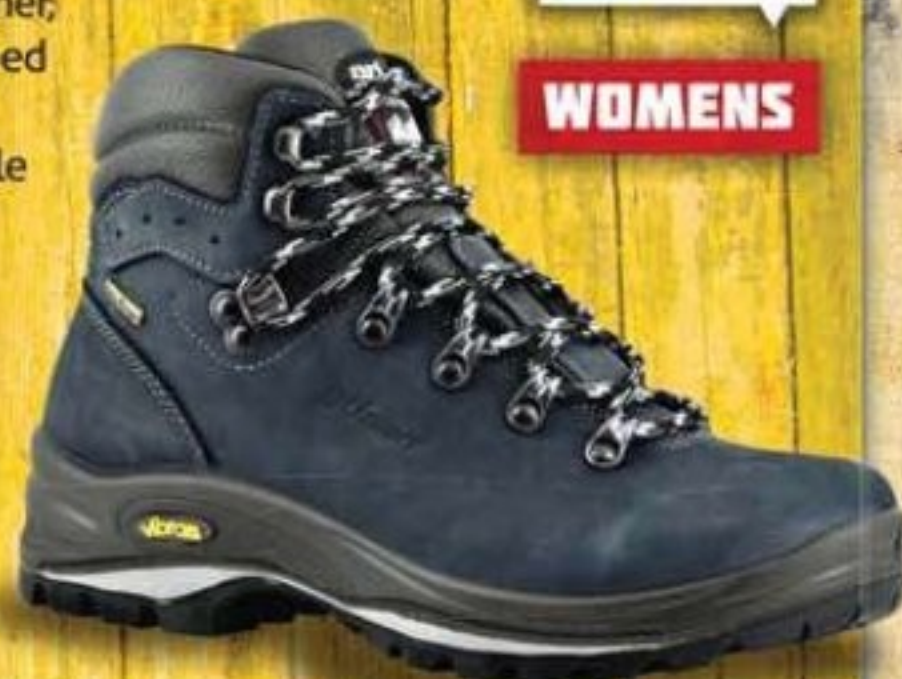
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CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2014

FEATURES

32 **Christmas gift guide**

The ultimate gifts for every outdoor enthusiast

40 **Tararua Monopoly**

A competitive grab for Tararua huts makes the perfect rainy evening activity

46 **Twenty-one ranger secrets**

Stunning hidden spots revealed by those who know the backcountry as well as anyone

60 **Beneath glowing skies**

Five-metre swells and irritable sea lions – a five-week kayak trip around Stewart Island

82 **Seven tips for better outdoor photos**

Valuable advice to help you win the 2015 Wilderness photo competition

WAYPOINTS

DESTINATIONS

20 **A tarn fine spot**

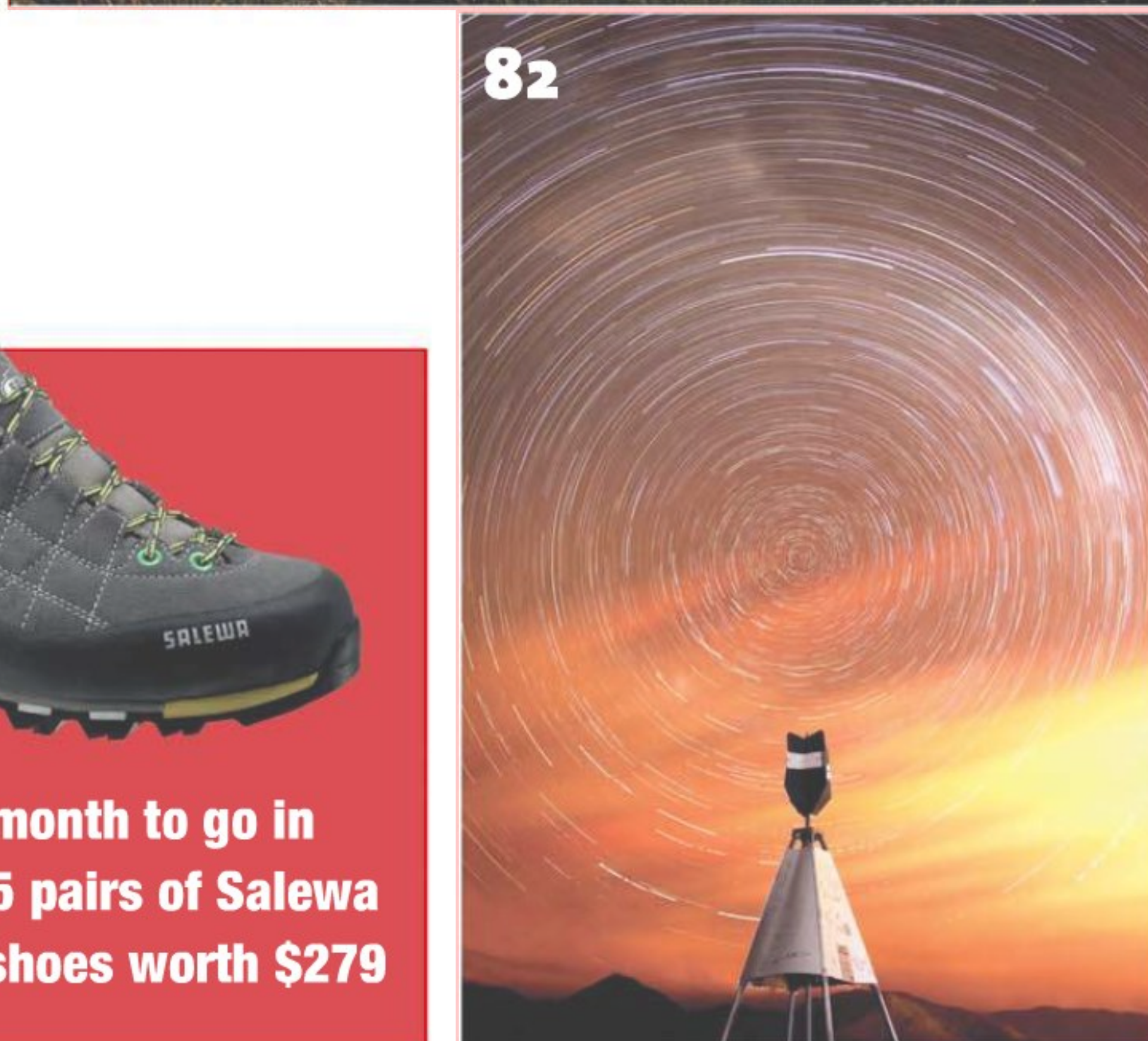
Wye Creek Route, Remarkables Conservation Area

22 **A noble line**

Cook Range, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park

24 **See more**

Alpine buttercups



66



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CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2014

REGULARS

4 Editorial

6 Pigeon post

Letters to the editor

8 Last weekend

What did you get up to last weekend?

10 Walkshorts

News and events

15 Gear news

The latest in gear tech and innovation

16 Five reasons to get outside this month

16 Wilderness Word

Enter our crossword competition to win great prizes

18 Wild people

A man without fear who spent 30 years guiding and building huts in Fiordland

26 Off the Beaten Track

It's hard work finding a quiet spot on Mt Owen in the height of summer

36 Wild comment

When are trip leaders absolutely necessary?

38 Wild families

Why putting up with snorers and crying babies is just par for the course in popular huts

102 Out there

Mick Abbott ponders the indefinable sense of 'wilderness'

104 Hotshot

Resting falcon, Central Otago



THE MANUAL

Trips, skills, health, gear

WILD TRIPS

70 Kawakawa Bay Track, Taupo

72 Gibbs Hill, Abel Tasman National Park

74 Manuka Hut, Hakatere Conservation Area

75 Post Office Rock, Manapouri

76 Whangamumu Te Toroa Track loop, Cape Brett

78 Wild Range

Aicken Range, Arthur's Pass National Park

86 Wild Review

Overnight packs

88 Wild Review

Energy bars

90 Skills

Three multitool uses you hadn't thought of

Avoiding summer complacency
The plant used as a soap and to relieve sore throats

91 Camp food

Bake your own billy bread

92 Wild Books

Wilderness books

94 Buyer's guide

94 Pocket knives and multitools

96 Hiking shorts, pants and tees

COVER: Searching for Queenstown's best campsite in The Remarkables. See p20
PHOTO: Dennis Radermacher

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AS 2014 COMES to an end, it's only natural to think back over the year that was.

For me, it was the year I welcomed my first child into the world – 11 months ago, now. I haven't had much time to dwell on the impact Alice has had on my life. Late nights, early starts, interrupted sleep and giving my constant attention to the wee girl doesn't leave much time for 'thinking'. That said, it doesn't take Aristotle to figure out it's been rewarding.

Next year will be even better: Alice will turn one, she'll be walking more, beginning swimming lessons and speaking her first words – all amazing milestones, but the one experience I'm looking forward to most is the one that makes New Zealand truly great: the outdoors.

This summer, Alice will go on her first tramp, strapped to her dad's back. I'm picking it'll be one of the best trips I've ever done. Bold statement I know and there's always the risk of the reality not matching the expectation, as happens with the film version of your favourite book.

I've carefully thought through the trips we'll do: we're going bush walking in the Waitakere Ranges, volcano climbing in the Hauraki Gulf and coastal tramping on the Coromandel. And if I get the baby seat for my mountain bike, we'll even go for some rides.

Regardless of how these trips go, one thing is for certain: the outdoors



will never be the same for me again. But that's OK, I've got entirely new and happy experiences coming my way.

Thanks for reading *Wilderness* this year. I hope you have a wonderful summer filled with outdoor adventure and lasting memories.

Happy Christmas and all the best for 2015.

- Alistair Hall

PS: I've caved, I'm now on twitter. If you're interested, you can find me @alhall74.

Merry Christmas

E-newsletter

Wilderness Weekly is now being delivered by email each Monday. To get the latest in outdoor news, gear and trips of the week head to www.wildernessmag.co.nz to sign up.



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2012 MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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CHEAP ALTERNATIVE TO AN EPIPEN

MATTHEW PIKE'S STORY 'A sting in the tale' (October 2014) about wasps and the nuisance they are to trampers and nature was timely.

For most of us, the first awareness about a wasp nest is suddenly being stung. The German wasp will attack en masse and pursue an unlucky trumper for 20m or more. The smaller common wasp is more tolerant, until provoked, but will rarely chase a person more than a few metres. They only attack in numbers if you loiter close to the nest. Most people beat a hasty retreat, but some get overcome by the shock of a sudden attack and incur numerous stings.

These stings pack a serious punch and if the victim goes into shock, the outcome could be life threatening. As the article explained, an EpiPen can offset this condition.

An EpiPen is easy to self-administer but at around \$130 is expensive. EpiPens are also in doses for adults as well as children, so you may need to carry two of them.

An alternative is vials of adrenalin available from most pharmacies for about \$20 with a syringe. Vials can be placed in a small container, like a toothbrush holder, and insulated with foam to keep them cool. This method is not as easy to administer as an EpiPen, but is a good low-cost option as well as being effective if several people get stung.

Even if a person has never had a bad reaction to a sting, everyone is wise to carry such a kit in wasp country.

- Bryce Buckland, Nelson



Bryce wins a Bear Grylls Ultimate Survival Knife worth \$99.99 from www.gerbergear.com. Readers, send your letter to the editor for a chance to win.

HOT AND BOTHERED

I'VE JUST BELATEDLY read 'Some like it hot' (March 2014). Like the author, I get fed up with people stoking up the fire, except when it is really necessary.

So why is it that all sleeping bag advertising, and the reviews in *Wilderness*, always stress how warm sleeping bags are and tend to ignore the cheaper, cooler ones? Some of us, like my wife and I, sleep 'hot' and need cool sleeping bags. Even when tenting in cold weather we survive very well by zipping up for a change, and if really necessary putting some clothes on, although in a tiny tent this isn't often the case and I nearly always have my feet poking out the bottom zip, inside a silk liner. The thought of using a 'mummy' bag horrifies me! Even one without side and bottom zips would not be on my shopping list.

A few years ago I got sucked in and bought one which was far too hot for me. I think salespeople should ask two questions: do you always sleep in huts and do you sleep hot?

If the answer to either question is 'yes', then steer the customer to a rectangular bag with side and bottom zips. They can always put clothes on for more warmth if necessary.

- John Howe, Takaka

FALLING APART

I HAVE JUST finished reading the article 'The dire state of alpine huts' (September 2014). What the author, Matthew Pike, does not mention is that some of the huts mentioned in the article are in an internationally recognised UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The practical potential of World Heritage marketing should act as a trigger for ensuring the upkeep of our alpine heritage and contribute to the huts' funding in a broader sense. Furthermore, World Heritage status, and associated tourism benefits, should help create visibility and enhance awareness of the need to maintain these huts, thereby attracting more attention and an increased level of support from DOC and other vested stakeholders.

Allowing some of the alpine huts to slip into a state of disrepair undermines the appropriation of World Heritage status. The predominantly economic narrative presented in the article – public versus private funding – is that the

huts need to pay for themselves, but World Heritage status in many other parts of the world is well proven and effective in promoting conservation and development of all park assets, not just those at the visitor centres.

- Rodney Garrard, Switzerland

BOLD CLAIMS DON'T STACK UP

I READ PETE Lusk's opinion piece 'Bold road to nowhere' (October 2014) with some disbelief.

I am surprised that a national publication has picked up a swathe of damaging and, quite frankly, incorrect comments from an individual who seems to have a fairly big axe to grind and published them without attempting to corroborate the information or invite comment from either the Mokihinui-Lyell Backcountry Trust or NZ Cycle Trail Incorporated.

The fact is, The Old Ghost Road has about 10km of trail left to build and is currently being used, quite happily, by significant numbers of cyclists and trampers.

As far as the reality of the money is

concerned, let me assure your readers that Lusk's figures of several million dollars are pretty wide of the mark and he should probably revise his figures down by 50 per cent. Furthermore, after devoting significant time to bemoaning the poor condition of the trail and inferring riders are dicing with death at every turn, I am shocked that Lusk then suggests The Old Ghost Road is part of a dastardly scheme by a triad of mining interests to open up the area to mining. Really?

When it comes down to it, The Old Ghost Road offers a challenging and spectacular ride (or walk, if that's your cup of tea) through a historically significant and beautiful piece of Aotearoa.

One that Kiwis can be proud of.

- Evan Freshwater, e-mail

I'VE BEEN INFORMED that only 10km of The Old Ghost Road cycle trail remains to be completed. The promised mid-2015 opening looks set to be realised. I look forward to that.

- Muriel Donald, Punakaiki

I AM A conservationist, a lifelong backcountry user and lover of our great outdoors. I have been involved with The Old Ghost Road since February 2011 when I joined two experienced and hardy fellows as we set out from Lyell to begin construction in earnest on the trail. Prior to my involvement, there had already been three phenomenal years of planning, preparation, submissions, consultation, fundraising and countless weekends of volunteer efforts to get the project off the ground.

At that point in my life I saw this as a once in a lifetime opportunity to be involved in something entirely special and unique. I still believe this 43 months later.

Like everyone who has been fortunate to spend time working or volunteering on The Old Ghost Road, or the growing numbers of recreational users who are sharing and experiencing this joyful place and this once in a lifetime project, I believe in The Old Ghost Road. I believe we are doing a great job and I am proud to have played a small part.

Please come and see for yourselves and believe what you like.

- Jim McIlraith, Westport

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YOUR TRIPS, YOUR PIX



Chen, Jenny, Yuyo and Murray walked the Pouakai Crossing in Egmont National Park



Six-year-old Andrew Fincham visited Devils Den Bivvy in Lake Sumner Forest Park

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What did you get up to last weekend?



Kate and Louis Brewster tramped the Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk with their nana and poppa



Noel Sulzberger climbed Mt Taranaki with Patrick and Simon Butler



Gloria, Amen and Taemen Lee tramped Nelson Lakes' St Arnaud Range



Jahyung and Jo Lee tramped through snow to Longview Hut in the Ruahine Range.



John Arthur took a break next to North Mitre Stream on his way to Cow Creek Hut



Bella Donoghue enjoyed clowning around while doing the Cape Brett Track with her dad



Hayden Rabel and Skye Patterson-Kane walked Isthmus Peak Track, Lake Hawea



Si Leonard climbed Mt Robert in Nelson Lakes National Park



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➔ 'LET IT BE LIGHT', SAYS CREATIVE STUDENT

Engineering student Luke Sinclair became fed up with carrying empty gas canisters when walking the Te Araroa Trail. So the 24-year-old got to work creating a better way to cook food on long distance tramps and believes he's found the answer.

Sinclair has designed a lightweight (300g) stainless steel wood burning stove that he says



Luke Sinclair with his wood burning stove

can boil a litre of water in less than 10 minutes.

The Trail Blazer has an outer cone that insulates the inner chamber and provides a sturdy base.

But it differs from other lightweight wood stoves in that it has a removable feed tube which allows access to the base of the fire, making it easier to start. The tube is angled to allow fuel to feed the fire automatically.

"The support cone, feed tube and pot support are all detached and stored within the main chamber," said Sinclair.

The project – part of his bachelor of engineering degree at the University of Waikato – has taken him a year to research and design and he now has a prototype which he hopes to improve further.

"My ultimate goal is to get this to the point where it could be manufactured and distributed on a profitable scale." Sinclair knows he has plenty of tests and adjustments to do before this happens but, now his exams have finished, he can take it into the bush and test it in a range of conditions.

"In a couple of years I hope to walk the 4000km Pacific Crest Trail from Canada to Mexico, fuelled solely by the Trail Blazer."

- Matthew Pike

➔ A BAD TIME TO BE A RAT

Figures are emerging from targeted regions in DOC's Battle for our Birds campaign that show the 1080 drops are doing the job in terms of predators killed.

DOC measures rat, mice and, in some cases, stoat numbers by the percentage of tracking tunnels in which the animals are found.

Results from Iris Burn in Fiordland are startling. Prior to the 1080 drop, the rat count was at 72 per cent. After the drop this fell to zero. The mouse count fell from 77 per cent to 21 per cent.

In Southland's Waitutu Forest, the rat count fell from 22 per cent to zero, the mouse count from 70 per cent to 21 per cent and the stoat count from 40 per cent to zero. DOC's Herb Christophers said the early stats are promising: "Low rodent numbers are a good sign for birds breeding. The stoats get hammered by secondary poisoning by eating rats or mice that have eaten the bait."

Mice are more difficult to kill because rats generally get to the bait first and mice have a smaller home range.

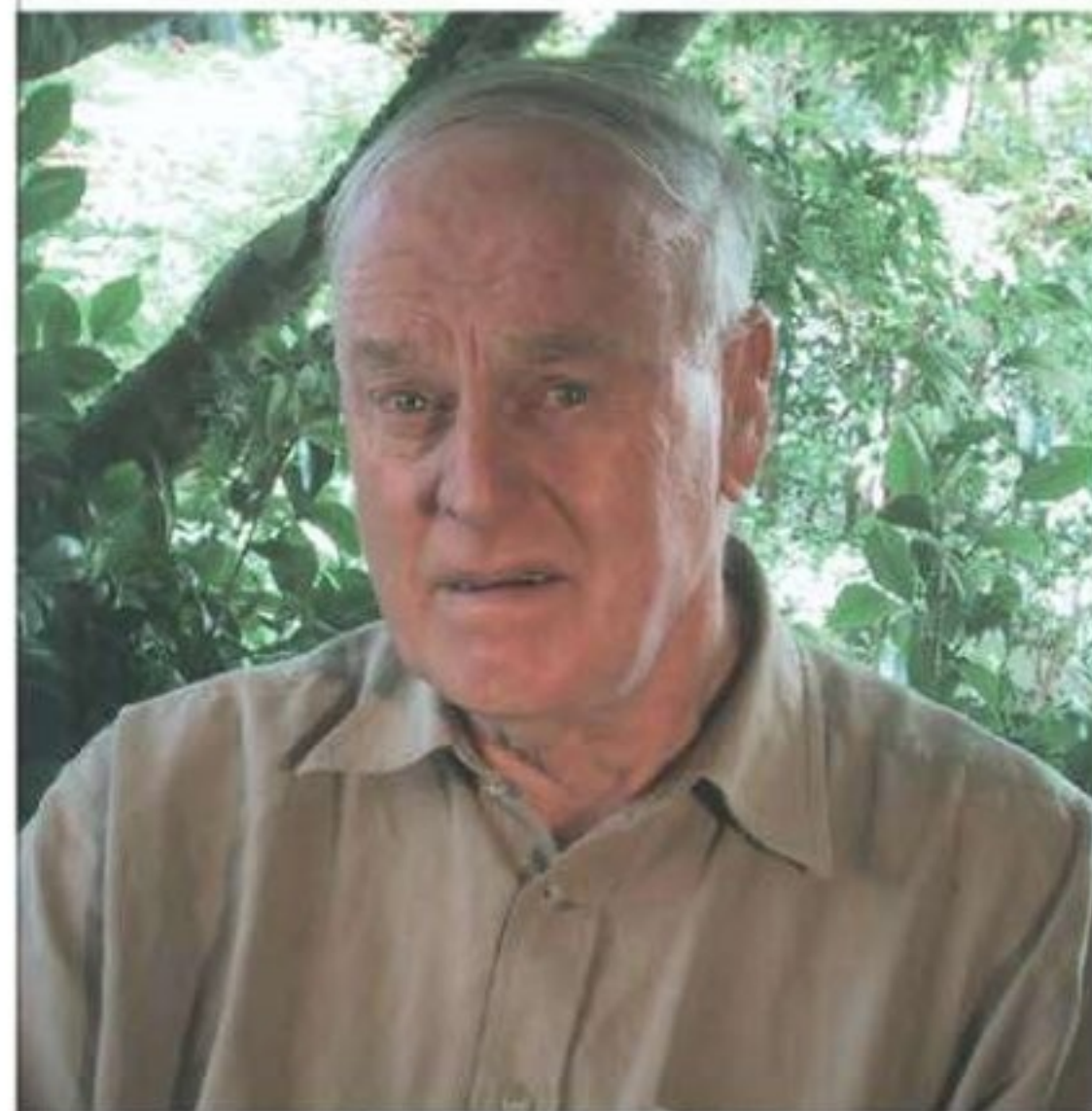
At the time of writing, DOC was approaching 500,000ha of the 700,000ha the department is planning to cover with the aerial drops.

The campaign is in response to the surge in pest predator numbers this year caused by an unusually large beech mast.



Orange fronted parakeet – one of several critically endangered species DOC is trying to protect

➔ TRIBUTE TO WALKWAYS PIONEER BOB USSHER (1929-2014)



BRIAN STEPHENSON

Many in the outdoors community will be sad to hear about the recent death of Bob Ussher, aged 85. An Aucklander and long-term Alpine Sports Club member, Bob also served on the Federated Mountain Clubs executive and, perhaps most importantly, was the man behind the walkways concept.

During the mid-1960s, Bob became inspired by the idea of a national length walkway for New Zealand, similar to those that had already been established in the United States and Britain.

In 1967, Bob presented this idea to Federated Mountain Clubs. While accepting that it was a highly ambitious goal, FMC endorsed the concept and the 1970s saw walkways committees established around the country. Government supported the concept too, with the Walkways Act passed in 1975. Importantly, this legislation enabled a legal means of access over private land, while also maintaining the property rights of the landowner.

As well as his involvement with walkways, Bob also served on the Coromandel Forest Park Advisory Board during the late 1970s. While walkways faltered through lack of funding during the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was pleased to see the mantle taken up by Geoff Chapple, who spearheaded efforts to finally establish a nation-length trail, Te Araroa.

In recent years, Bob continued to maintain a keen interest in mountain matters.

He died peacefully on 22 October, surrounded by family.

- Shaun Barnett



WHO'S YOUR OUTDOOR HERO?

The Wilderness Outdoor Awards are back, and this year we've added a new category: your outdoor hero. Your hero could be someone who has achieved great feats in the outdoors, worked tirelessly for a good cause, inspired you or even saved a life.

Either way, we want to know who they are and why they deserve to win.

In addition to this category we're also asking you to recommend the stores and brands you've been most impressed with over the past 12 months.

It might be the price or quality of the product you took a liking to, or perhaps the ease of transaction or advice and support you received from staff.

Based on the quality of nominations, we'll choose the finalists and ask you to vote for your favourites in each category.

Last year, the inaugural Wilderness Outdoor Awards was hugely successful with more than 1000 nominations and nearly 3000 readers voting.

Macpac won the brand and online store awards, Bivouac Outdoor the chain retailer award, Small Planet Sports in Queenstown the independent retailer award and Save Fiordland



Last year's winners from above: Save Fiordland, Small Planet Sports and Macpac



the conservation initiative award.

You have until February 2 to get your nominations in. Head to wildernessmag.co.nz and follow the homepage link to nominate in the following categories:

- Independent retailer of the year
- Chain retailer of the year

- Web store of the year
- Brand of the year
- Outdoor hero of the year

Remember, we want to know who you've nominated and why. The more convincing your nomination, the more likely your choice will make the cut.

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PUT YOUR QUESTIONS TO MAGGIE BARRY

After the post-election cabinet reshuffle, Nick Smith was replaced as Minister of Conservation by Maggie Barry.

And this is your chance to put the questions that matter to the new minister.

Barry is a relatively new MP, having worked in radio and television for 30 years. She was first elected North Shore MP in 2011 and, in her first term, became chair of Bluegreens Caucus – the National Party's advisory group for conservation and environmental issues.

On her website she says: "We have to be vigilant and face up to our responsibilities and our woeful environmental track record. Down the years we've let too many introduced pests decimate our native plants and birds."

"As an island nation we haven't treated our ocean with the respect it deserves. We've allowed some of our waterways to become badly polluted and I want to be part of a government that puts that right."

So what will Barry bring to the table? This is your chance to ask her questions about her position on conservation issues that matter to you, and about what she hopes to achieve over the next three years.

We'll select the best of your questions and put them straight to the minister. We'll publish her answers in the February issue.

You can submit questions by emailing editor@lifestylepublishing.co.nz, on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/wildernessmag](https://www.facebook.com/wildernessmag)), or through twitter (@NZWilderness) by December 15.

WELLINGTON'S MINI-HUTS



Don't forget to sign the hut book and switch off the light at Robin Hut

Wellington city now has its own backcountry hut collection, though they may not provide the shelter you're looking for to escape the capital's blowy conditions.

Artists Kemi Whitwell and Niko Leyden have dotted a series of miniature huts, complete with track markers and intentions books, across the city.

One of the huts, Aoraki Biv, near Bidwell Street, is big enough to step inside (if you bend over), but the others are truly miniature.

The orange Robin Hut, at Red Rocks Beach, has bunks, fire place, table and seating and even an interior light.

There's also a hut on Mt Albert, in the Waimapihi Reserve, on Matiu/Somes Island and eight huts in the rocks at Tarakena Bay.

Whitwell and Leyden are both keen trampers and received funding from Wellington City Council's Public Art Fund to create the display.

For precise locations of the huts, take a look at keminiko.com/miniature-hikes and don't forget to fill in the intentions books as you walk around the city.

GREAT PRIZES FOR GREAT PHOTOS



We've already had a fantastic selection of entries for the 2015 Wilderness Photo Competition.

In October's issue we asked readers to enter their best photos in either of the following categories:

- Above the tree-line
- Huts and camping
- Rivers, lakes and ocean

We're giving away great prizes to the winners of each category. The overall winner will receive a Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX7 worth \$1499, while the winners of the two remaining categories each get a Panasonic Lumix DMC-FT5 tough compact camera worth \$499.

Now summer's approaching, it gives the best opportunity to get out there and get that perfect shot.

Email your entries to wildernessphotocomp@lifestylepublishing.co.nz.

The closing date for entries is January 31 next year – so that gives you the whole of the summer hols. The winners will be announced in the March 2015 issue of *Wilderness*.

COUNTING WHIO

Anyone heading to the Ruahines should keep their eyes and ears open for signs of the rare whio (blue duck).

DOC is launching The Great 2014-15 Ruahine Whio Census and is asking trampers to let staff know every time they encounter one in the forest park.

The department also wants to know if you see a male (which whistles), a female (which croaks or growls), whether they have ducklings and, if so, how many and roughly what size they are.

Either send the info to manawatu@doc.govt.nz or call Palmerston North DOC office on 06 350 9700.



DOC wants trampers to keep an eye out for whio in the Ruahines

TELL SOMEONE YOUR PLANS

IT MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE

New Zealand's outdoors is a great place to be and there are so many different ways to enjoy it. But before you set off on your adventure, take the time to plan and prepare for a safe trip.

Follow the 5 simple rules of Outdoor Safety Code and make sure you tell someone your plans. Tell someone you trust where you are going and leave a date and time for when to raise the alarm if you haven't returned.

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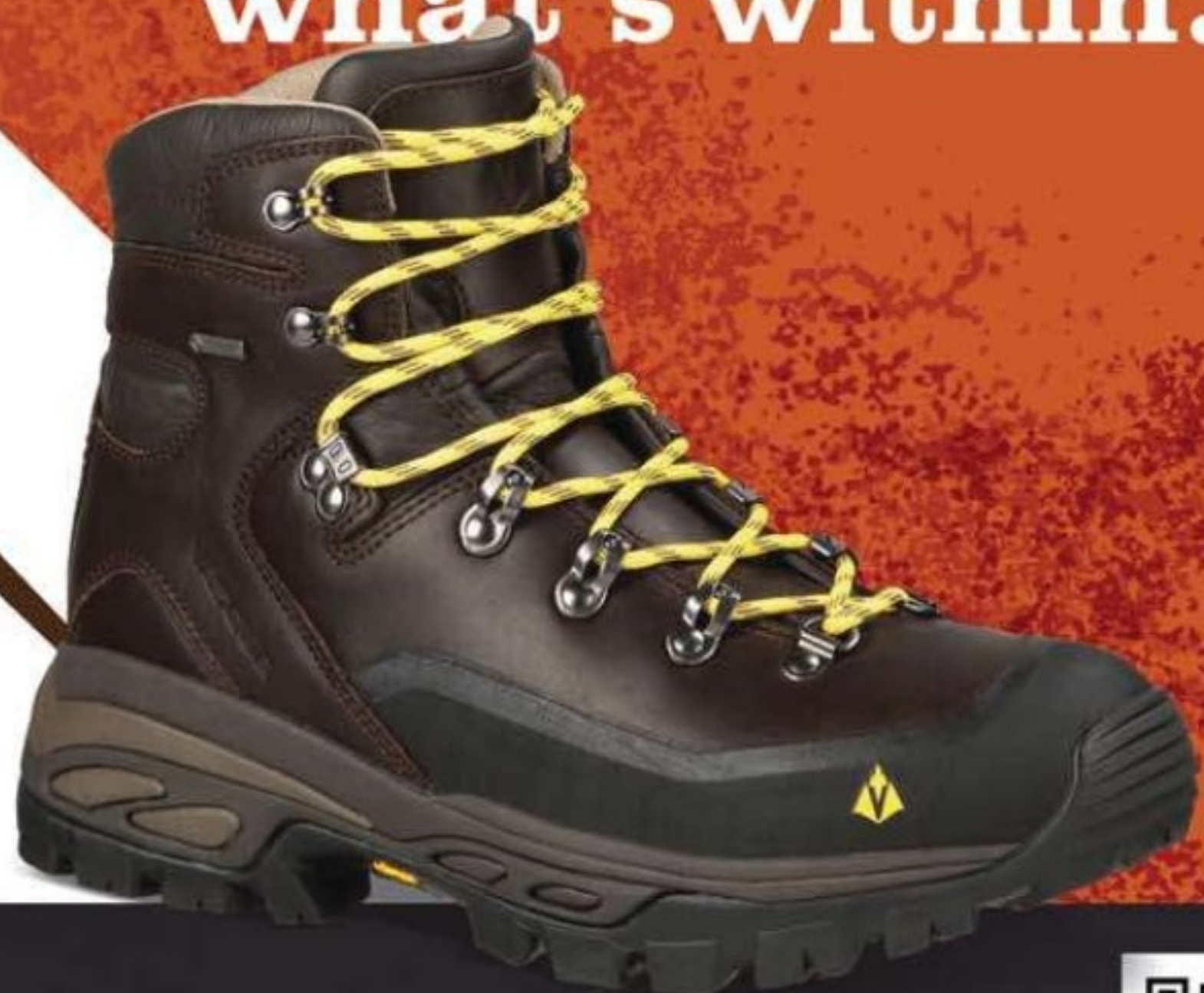


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Tramping was considered unfeminine and mixed groups needed chaperones

HISTORY SOMETIMES REPEATS

If you think *Wilderness*' roving editor **Shaun Barnett** knows everything there is to know about tramping – you'd be right, but it wasn't always that way. Here are five things he learnt while researching his latest book *Tramping, A New Zealand History*

1. WELLINGTON CLUBS

Wellington tramping clubs played a key role in the development of organised tramping in the 1920s and 1930s. Three of the first four tramping clubs formed in New Zealand were Wellington-based. Particularly influential was Fred Vosseler, co-founder of the Tararua Tramping Club, formed in 1919. Not only did his club provide a good model, but Vosseler actively encouraged other clubs to form around the country. He visited places as far afield as Auckland and Dunedin to give advice; and by doing so helped establish nationwide links between trampers.

2. WOMEN

Women also played a formative role, despite prejudice and gender restrictions. Early women trampers faced considerable difficulties because tramping was widely viewed as 'unfeminine'. Skirts were impractical but wearing shorts was unthinkable, so these early tramping women had to improvise by using riding jodhpurs, which weren't ideal, but did cover their legs! Mixed groups also had to have chaperones.

By challenging such rigid social boundaries, these 'lady trampers' were pioneers.

3. CONSERVATION ETHIC

Early trampers were often conservationists, long before it became a mainstream idea. From the outset, many clubs included preservation of mountain flora and fauna as one of their goals. In the ensuing decades, trampers fought not only for the establishment of national parks, but also against dams, mines and milling in the backcountry. Access was important too; the Otago Tramping Club staged a protest walk in the 1960s to gain rights for independent trampers on the Milford Track.

4. THE ROLE OF THE STATE

The relative effort of state and individuals or clubs has fluctuated, with both playing important roles at key points in our history. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the government hoped to encourage both international and domestic tourism by establishing huts and tracks like the Milford, Routeburn and Copland. This ensured tramping had a good start, which was followed by government assistance for track building in places like the Tararuas. During the 1920s and 1930s, clubs largely took

over this role, while the government took a back seat. After the Second World War, both clubs and agencies, including the Forest Service, embarked on a huge hut-building boom. In recent years, after considerable hut building efforts by DOC, we're now seeing clubs and individuals become more involved in maintenance once again.

5. FOREIGN INFLUENCE

American ideas have had a surprisingly strong influence on the development of our backcountry, notably the concept of the national park. The formation of the USA's Yellowstone National Park in 1872 spurred other countries to follow suit, with Tongariro becoming the world's fourth national park in 1887. The concept of wilderness areas and long-distance trails originated in America too, as did the idea of interpretation panels at historic sights or lookouts, since widely adopted in New Zealand.

- *Tramping, A New Zealand History* by Shaun Barnett and Chris Maclean was published in October and is reviewed on p92.

The latest in outdoor gear news, trends and innovation

The FlowMo
with Marathon
Balance Pockets

WET WEATHER BAG

Montane's Prism bag (\$369) is designed for wet conditions. With 160g of Primaloft Eco synthetic fill, the bag maintains much of its insulating ability even if it gets wet. Paired with a breathable and windproof Pertex 30D ripstop shell and a zip that opens fully at the foot, the Prism can be aired and dried quickly if the worst does happen.

The Prism has a tailored anatomical form, top stitch panelling across the body and weighs 1156g.

Quick drying
Montane Prism



GOOD FOR YOUR BACK

Aarn Bodypack's latest daypack is versatile enough for the trail and – with the right accessories – school.

The 22l FlowMo Friend (\$99.90, 648g) has an auto-mould backpanel and shoulder straps and can be fitted with front balance pockets (\$79) to help maintain posture.

The pack can be converted into a school pack with Aarn's new Posture Perfect Balance Bag (\$139) which uses the weight of books and drink in front to balance the pack's weight.

PACKABLE PACK

Want to make a summit bid or side trip to a scenic spot but not keen on hauling your heavy multiday pack with you? The North Face might have the answer with its Verto 26 (\$150) pack which stuffs into its own pocket and weighs just 310g.

Made from 100D ripstop cargo chute fabric, the Verto features a harness, two zipped pockets and enough capacity for essential day trip kit. A triple-point compression system also allows the pack to double as a sleeping bag stuffsac, so you're only bringing essential items on your trip.



The lightweight
and packable
Verto 26

STREET STYLING FOR THE HILLS

Scarpa has taken its popular Mojito approach shoe and added the kind of colour you'd normally associate with street shoes.

The Multicolour Mojito approach shoe (\$249, 700g) has a Vibram Spyder sole, anti-shock midsole, rubber toe rand, to-the-toe lacing for adjustment control and soft suede uppers. Shoes come in a range of 16 vibrant colours, including blue, green, pink, red and purple.



Brightly coloured
Mojito

NEW BACKCOUNTRY MEALS

A popular British brand of pre-cooked food that can be eaten warm or cold is available in New Zealand.

Wayfarer is a 'wet' meal and is not freeze-dried or dehydrated, so does not require water to cook. Simply pour the contents into your pot and you're ready to go.

The meals have a three-year shelf life and contain no artificial additives, chemicals or genetically-modified ingredients. There is a range of breakfast, main and dessert meals. Each 300g main comes in a burst-resistant pouch and costs \$12.



Ready to cook
Wayfarer beef

SOLO CAMPING

Macpac has added the Sololight (\$549.99, 1250g) one-person tent to its 2015 line-up.

It has a single DAC Featherlite pole with two small struts at each end to maximise living space and there's extensive use of mesh in the inner.

For those who really want to slash the weight they carry, the tent can be pitched with fly or inner only.

Macpac's
Sololight



POLES FOR PARKS

Going for a walk in a national park this summer?

Gabel's National Park (\$39.99, 350g) telescopic pole with shock absorption is fitted with a carbide tip for grip on rocks and in the wet. It also has a rubber tip to protect sensitive tracks. But why call it National Park? Each pole is printed with a map of New Zealand showing all the national parks so you can tick them off as you go.



The wharf at Rotoroa Island



West Auckland District Tramping Club is visiting Rotoroa Island. Stay a day or the full weekend. The conservation island has a heritage museum, several gorgeous beaches and a host of tracks. Call Denise: (09) 827 1552.

5 REASONS TO GET OUTSIDE IN DECEMBER



Terawhiti Hill



MAGNUS MANSKE/CREATIVE COMMONS

IF YOU HAVE LITTLE KIDS, CHRISTCHURCH TRAMPING CLUB IS ORGANISING A FAMILY DAY AT LAKE COLERIDGE WITH A 3-4HR WALK. IT'S EASY-PACED AND SUITABLE FOR KIDS AGED SEVEN AND UNDER. CONTACT CHRIS: (03) 358 9125.

Lake Coleridge



SAMUAL MANN/CREATIVE COMMONS

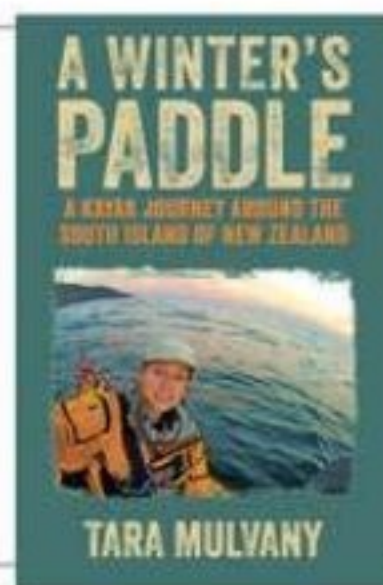
Tararua Tramping Club travels to Oteranga Bay, west of Wellington. Trampers will head up Black Gully before climbing the 459m Terawhiti Hill. Contact Michele: (04) 972 2350.

Join Tauranga Tramping Club on a moderate tramp in the Kaimais. The group will start from Dickey Flat Rd and head south towards Franklin Rd. Contact Jean: (07) 578 8785.

Join Hamilton Tramping Club's trip to Mangorewa Ecological Area, north of Rotorua. The group will climb to a ridge before descending along the bed of Mangorewa River. Contact Kathy: (07) 856 8015.

WILDERNESS WORD

Complete the crossword and re-arrange the letters in the shaded squares to spell out the hidden solution. Send your answer, with your name and address, by December 19 to: wildernessword@lifestylepublishing.co.nz, or WildernessWord, PO Box 251566, Pakuranga, Auckland 2140. All correct entries will go in the draw to win one of five copies of Tara Mulvany's book, *A Winter's Paddle* worth \$34.99.

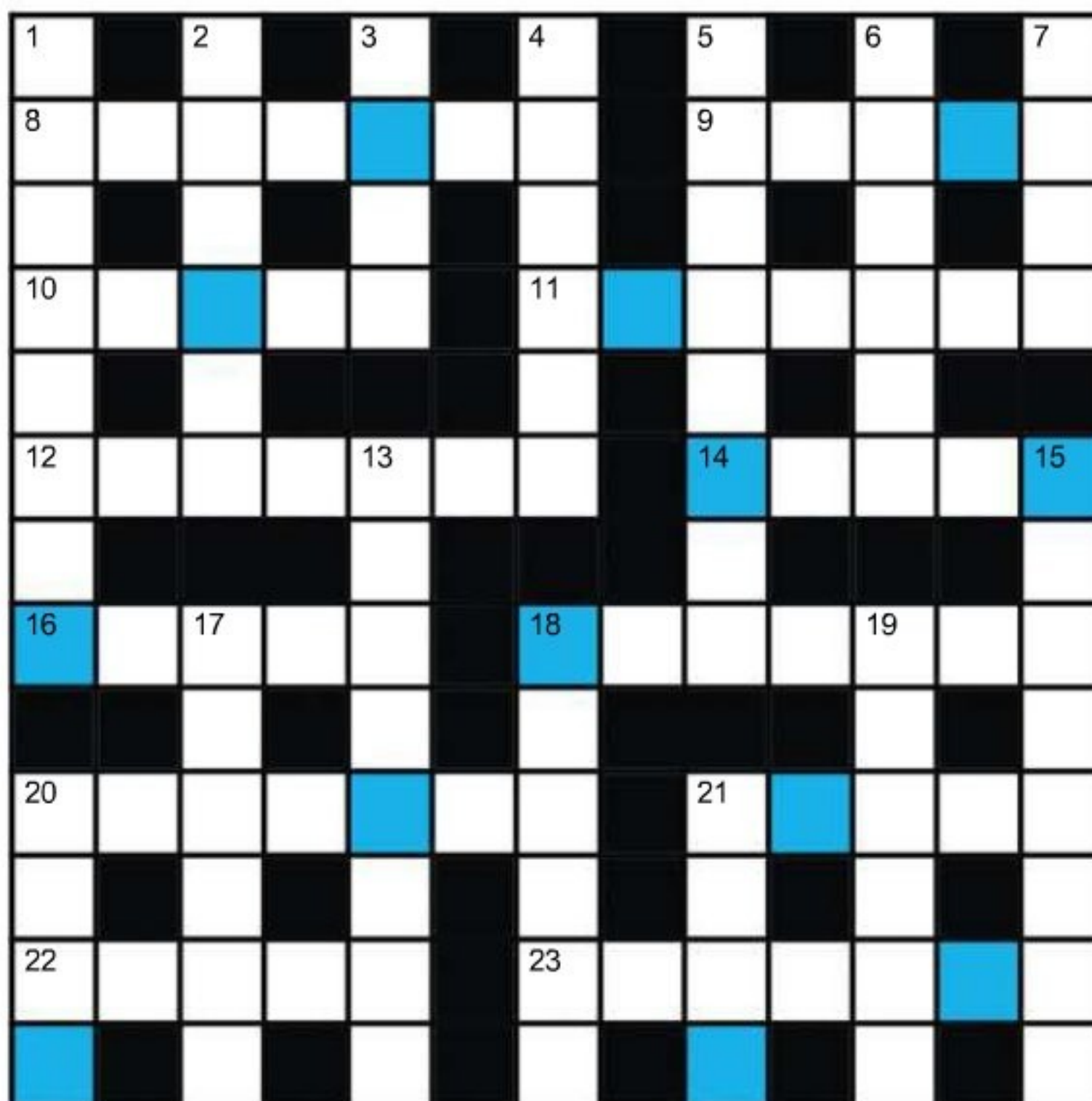


A Winter's Paddle \$34.99

Embarking on an adventure never before attempted in winter, *A Winter's Paddle* is Tara Mulvany's story of her journey around the coast of New Zealand's South Island. Inspired by a three-month sea kayak journey through Fiordland, 23-year-old Mulvany set off from Milford Sound in May 2012 with her boyfriend on a mission to circumnavigate the South Island.

Across

8. ____ Pass - mountain pass in NZ's Southern Alps (7)
9. Slow regular movement of sea in rolling waves (5)
10. ____ land - broad high plateau (5)
11. ____ Bound - NZ outdoor challenge organisation (7)
12. Flat mass of ice floating at sea (3,4)
14. Native NZ palm tree (5)
16. Introduced animal that is major threat to NZ native birds (5)
18. Undertook challenging wilderness activity (7)
20. ____ dolphin - small endangered NZ dolphin (7)
21. Relating to particular area (5)
22. Small township 7km north of 8 Across (5)
23. Transport injured person from wilderness by helicopter (7)



Down

1. Small fluttering birds seen in NZ bush (8)
2. Snow and ice in avalanche area are not this (6)
3. Large sand hill created by wind (4)
4. On or towards land from water (6)
5. ____ drinks replenish electrolytes and minerals in body lost during vigorous activity (8)
6. Reorganise gear you will be carrying on tramp (6)
7. This can be pulled over snow to transport supplies (4)
13. Relating to coastal or shore region (8)
15. What gently uneven terrains do (8)
17. Plant with unusual flower - NZ has over 100 native species of this (6)
18. Abel ____ National Park - great NZ outdoor area (6)
19. ____ acid - substance produced in muscle tissue during strenuous activity (6)
20. Part of trumper's jacket (4)
21. Mighty NZ kauri Tane Mahuta is ____ of the Forest (4)

Hidden Solution: Southern spot to kayak (8,5)

November's hidden solution: Bird sanctuary

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A MAN WITHOUT FEAR

Zygmunt Kępka with
Mt Kępka behind

Last month marked the 70th anniversary of the arrival in New Zealand of 733 Polish orphans from war-gripped Europe. Among them, Zygmunt Kępka who went on to spend 30 years guiding and building huts in Fiordland. By **Alina Suchanski**

A close look at the map of the Milford Track reveals an intriguing Mt Kępka amongst the few named peaks in this area of Fiordland National Park. It stands at the head of the Clinton River North Branch and towers above the Arthur River and Milford Track.

The man who gave the mountain its name is Zygmunt Kępka, an accomplished photographer, guide and climber.

Better known amongst his friends and colleagues as Zyg or Zygy, he first came to Fiordland in 1957 as a carpenter working at Milford Sound renovating and expanding Quintin Huts (now Quintin Lodge) on the Milford Track. When his building contract was completed, Zygy became a guide on the track, a role he played for 10 summer seasons.

I first heard of Zygy from my neighbour, Ken Bradley, who told me that Zygy used to live in a house he had built just across the street. I became fascinated by Zygy's story, because it combines my two passions – Pol-

ish history and New Zealand mountains.

Born on July 7, 1930, Zygy was nine when the Second World War started. His idyllic life on a farm in eastern Poland ended abruptly with his family's deportation to the Ural Mountains.

Here he climbed his first peak, Lysaya Gora (the Bold Mountain), at the age of 10. It left a lasting impression.

When their parents died, Zygy, then 14, and his brother Ian came to New Zealand with a large group of Polish orphans invited by the New Zealand Government and housed in an ex-POW camp in Pahiatua.

At 16, Zygy left the camp to become a carpenter and met Arthur Robinson who showed him tramping the Kiwi way. He took Zygy up Ben Lomond near Queenstown and they tramped together in Blue Mountains, western Otago and the Hailford Track.

In 1953, Zygy bought his first camera, a German-made Zeiss Ikon and quickly discovered a passion for photography.

As a Milford Track guide, Zygy walked up and down McKinnon Pass every day and he soon became captivated by this savagely beautiful land. He climbed many of the surrounding mountains, often solo, and became a local mountaineering legend. He was the first person to climb the 1781m Mt Kępka, though he did so unintentionally.

"One day I was walking up Mt Elliot and came across a chamois," Zygy recalls. "It was the first sighting of chamois in Fiordland, so I took photos of it and followed it. Then it disappeared and I ended up climbing this unnamed peak. I did it in one day, up and down."

"Later, the other guides were calling it Zyg's mountain and someone had it registered under my name. I don't know who."

Zygy introduced Te Anau resident Ray Willett to climbing. Willett describes the Pole as a tough outdoorsman. "He was one of those individuals with no fear, who didn't know anything about techniques, ropes, abseiling or slings, but he'd get up any mountain and get down again."

Zygy says he climbed to take photos and over the years amassed a collection of thousands of slides of New Zealand alpine scenery, flora and fauna.

Between his guiding seasons, he worked as a carpenter and in 1962 built Glaisnock Hut for the Fiordland National Park Board.

He later built huts in the Eyre and Takitimu Mountains. "Anything Zyg built was built to last," says John Von Tunzelman, a long-time work associate and friend.

When the Forest Service became part of the newly created DOC, Zygy continued to work for the department until 1990.

Zygy, now 84, never married. He moved to Napier and lives near his brother.

If you are tramping in the Takitimu or Eyre Mountains, chances are you might stay in one of the huts built by Zygy. **W**

**"Anything
Zyg built
was built
to last"**

– John Von Tunzelman

OUTDOOR AWARDS

New Zealand's magazine of the outdoors since 1991
Wilderness

2015

THEY'RE BACK

- › Do you have an outdoor hero?
- › Do you have a favourite outdoor brand?
- › Has a store given you excellent service?
- › Does one store or brand beat the rest on quality or price?

NOMINATE NOW

IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

1. **Outdoor hero of the year** Who has inspired you with great feats or tireless commitment to a cause?
2. **Independent retailer of the year** Does your local, privately owned gear shop deserve recognition?
3. **Chain retailer of the year** Which has given you consistently good service and a good product range?
4. **Web store of the year** Which gives good product range and ease of sale?
5. **Brand of the year** Can be any boot, pack, tent, clothing or outdoor equipment brand.

NOMINATE ONLINE

at wildernessmag.co.nz
by Monday, Feb 2.

REMEMBER the more convincing your nomination, the more likely your choice will make the cut

Bivouac Outdoor staff celebrate winning chain retailer of the year in 2014 – who will win in 2015?



A TARN FINE SPOT

Wye Creek Route, The Remarkables / **MODERATE**




My partner and I set off one weekend to journey into The Remarkables from the conveniently located ski field car park.

We followed the markers to Lake Alta, an easy half-hour walk away. From here we ventured a vague, mostly unmarked route to the saddle east of Double Cone.

We followed the Wye Creek Route from the saddle towards a few large tarns where the landscape changed drastically. The ski field with its barren, rocky terrain dominates the northern side of the saddle while the south side boasts a

basin with smoothly rolling terrain full of tussock and dotted with tarns.

There is the possibility of traversing the mountains to the east, opposite The Remarkables, tarn-hopping all the way to Lake Hope, six kilometres south. The lake would have been a great destination for a full day's walk but with bad weather closing in, we decided not to risk crossing the exposed ridgeline. Instead, we continued down the Wye Creek Route and found ourselves a campsite with an impressive view across a large tarn. 

- Dennis Radermacher



WILD FILE

Access Park at The Remarkables ski field

Grade Moderate

Time 2-3hr to Wye Creek tarns

Map CC11

Terrific camping opportunities on the Wye Creek Route




Walking the lower Cook Range, high above the river flats of the Tasman Valley. Mt Blackburn and Burnett Mountains dominate the backdrop

A NOBLE LINE

Cook Range, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park / **MODERATE**

The name is noble, and so too are the views from the Cook Range: beneath your feet the floor of the Tasman Valley sits, riven with ancient stream braids and dotted with matagouri. Two craggy mountain ranges flank either side, like giant armies on an infinite march: the Blackburn Range to the east and the Ben Ohau Range to the west. Beyond, to the south, the water from two great rivers – the Tasman and Hooker – combines with others to feed Lake Pukaki, shimmering in the distance like a great turquoise glaze over the dry of the valley.

Accessed from Hooker Corner, the track onto the Cook Range rears straight up, and it's quite rough at first. Even a short labour up the hill is rewarded though, as the views kick in fast and improve the higher you go.

Anywhere between the 1400m contour and Pt1566m makes a great destination for a day trip. If you're willing to carry a bit more gear there are excellent camping spots along the ridge, while those with basic alpine skills can aim for Mt Wakefield, further along the range. 

- Mark Watson



WILD FILE

Access Hooker River Bridge, Ball Road, Tasman Valley

Grade Moderate

Time 4–8hr return

Map BX15






See More... BUTTERCUPS

Make the effort to get above the treeline in these three locations and you may be rewarded with buttercups in bloom

Alpine flowers are one of the more picturesque elements of the tops during the summer months, and often add a delight to tramping that is lacking in other seasons. Buttercups, such as the misnamed Mount Cook 'lily', are some of the most conspicuous of our native alpine flora. New Zealand has 32 buttercup species, including about 19 that live in the mountains. Of these, some occur on the tops of both main islands, while others, like the rare *Ranunculus godleyanus*, have a more limited distribution.

With so many species, knowing how to identify them does take a bit of learning. Over the decades, several helpful alpine plants guidebooks have been published; the most recent called *Above the Treeline* by Alan Mark. Alternatively, trampers can now use apps available online to help identify species from their own photographs.

One of the most accessible places to observe native alpine buttercups is the Hooker Valley, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park. It's so well known for its displays of *Ranunculus lyallii* that photographing it with Aoraki/Mt Cook behind has almost become a cliché.

Here are three other species that trampers might like to seek out. 

- Shaun Barnett

1 - *RANUNCULUS INSIGNIS*, WAIKAMAKA VALLEY, RUAHINE FOREST PARK

This common species, known as the mountain buttercup or korikori, occupies many tops of the North Island, and as far south as Canterbury's Two Thumb Range. It grows as low as 700m, but will range as high as 1800m. One of the best sites I've seen it in is the head of this delightful Ruahine valley. Either tramp up the Waipawa River and over Waipawa Saddle, or for a more adventurous approach, head over Te Atuaoparapara from Sunrise Hut. During November and December, the upper part of the valley is usually full of flowering buttercups.

2 - *RANUNCULUS GODLEYANUS*, IVORY LAKE, WEST COAST

Due to its remote, spectacular location, Ivory Lake is hallowed ground for hut-baggers



Ranunculus insignis in the Waimakamaka Valley

SHAUN BARNETT/BLACK ROBIN PHOTOGRAPHY

and trans-alpine trampers alike. When I first visited in 1996, we could photograph the extraordinary juxtaposition of alpine plants next to icebergs floating in the nearby lake. While the remnant of the glacier grows smaller each year, it's still an excellent site for botanising, boasting a wide range of alpine plants. Perhaps most showy of them all is the rare *Ranunculus godleyanus*, which grows not only on the lake edges, but also on the talus slopes above. This buttercup is confined to the central Southern Alps, and likes wet feet. Mathias Saddle, the headwaters of the Hokitika River and Whitcombe Pass also provide good habitat, where it flowers in January and February.

3 - *RANUNCULUS SERICOPHYLLUS*, CASCADE SADDLE, MT ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK

Cascade Saddle is another magnificent place for alpine botanising. There are so many

microhabitats on the rolling, tarn-strewn, tussock-dominated ledge, that all sorts of species find a home there. *Ranunculus sericophyllus*, also known as the silky alpine buttercup, grows in ground-hugging mats, at high altitudes between about 1400 and 2100m. It ranges from Lewis Pass southwards.





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Access
the
inaccessible

**OFF THE
BEATEN TRACK**





MOUNT OWEN THE LONG WAY

NICK GROVES PLANS A
QUIET TRIP INTO KAHURANGI
NATIONAL PARK, BUT
DISCOVERS IN THE WARM
WEATHER OF SUMMER,
QUIET IS HARD TO FIND

Marie among the karst on Mt Owen

Mount Owen is a complicated little mountain, which is probably the reason I keep going back to lose myself amongst the intricate bare rock outcrops and softer herb and flower-filled basins. No two trips are ever the same with new corners awaiting discovery and limitless possibilities for getting lost, or at least a little misplaced from time to time. This exploratory approach to tramping allows for an element of the unexpected to creep in, and any adventure worth its salt should always include a degree of uncertainty.

It was time to stretch the legs and head away into the unseasonable sou'westers sweeping up the South Island. The prospect of overcrowded huts and busy tracks over the holiday period begged for an escape to somewhere less well trodden. Mt Owen is a justifiably popular destination, but sufficiently extensive and varied to avoid the crowds, or so we thought.

The easiest and quickest approach to reach this limestone summit, which at

1875m is the highest point in Kahurangi National Park, is from the Wangapeka Valley to the north of the range.

This, however, is an even further drive from Lyttelton so with plans of a quiet trip, and to see in the New Year on top of Mt Owen, Marie and I set off for the southern side via the Owen River Valley. The large number of cars parked in the field at the start of the track up valley suggested that even this side was 'occupied'. Maybe they'd already trekked over to the north?

Bulmer Creek offers an interesting route up and through the lower fortifications that surround a lot of the Mt Owen massif, and having been this way some seven years previously, I guessed it would all come back to me. Apart from initially overshooting the actual start of Bulmer Creek and heading up towards Sunrise Ridge (to be explored another time), mostly this was the case, although pink ribbon markers led us on a wild goose chase at one point. The trail from the narrow and impassable waterfall at the head of the Lower Bulmer Creek was more obvious than on my previous visit,

and before long we had crawled along the rightward leading ledges to the well-known 'ladder pitch'. Here, a well-anchored climbing rope with foot loops is conveniently draped over a particularly steep section of polished limestone bluff, and soon we were swinging our way up the final obstacle to easier ground.

After all the excitement, the gentle track under the canopy of beech trees that leads up to the small lake was a breeze and we looked forward to a picturesque camp in this natural rock amphitheatre. An orange tent greeted us as we approached the lake, then another, then several more as it soon became apparent that we had reached Tent City at Bulmer Lake. Of course, it clicked straight away that our 'road less trodden' passed above some of the finest cave systems in the land and our trip coincided with an annual caving camp.

At this juncture the wind increased, while light drizzle of the afternoon decided to behave most unseasonably and turn into driving sleet, with the added bonus that all level camping spots were already taken.





Left: Bulmer Lake far below; Above: Negotiating rock crevasses below Mt Owen on the way to Granity Pass Hut

Furthermore, my companion is no lover of wet boots and after a morning spent wading the rivers and creeks below, they were thoroughly soaked and rapidly numbing her feet and toes. I am asked about my perverse choice of route on a mountain that consists entirely of porous limestone and therefore has very little surface water, yet we somehow managed to spend half the day wading through water.

The army of resident cavers did their best to accommodate us among their city of tents and fortunately ours was small enough to squeeze between a couple of large rocks. Life improves manyfold once ensconced in a cosy sleeping bag with a cup of hot soup in hand, even if the sleet was by now threatening to turn to snow.

The adventures of the day were not entirely over. Later that evening, I set off to find the cavers' purpose-built toilet which

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WATER**

had been kindly offered to us. Somehow I took the wrong trail – there are many leading up to cave entrances in these parts – and it was sometime later that I stumbled across one of the cavers in the pitch black and disorientating forest. Inadequately clad in under-sized pink 'croc's (not mine, honestly), must have reinforced speleological opinion that those who prefer to remain above ground are a strange bunch indeed.

Morning, the last one of the year, and I began to understand the appeal of scurrying underground instead of braving the stiff sou'westers that continued to sweep over the elusive mountain above. But by late morning things had improved and the day looked promising enough to set off for the top of the mountain. The weather-beaten karst of Mt Owen offers perfect grip for hopping over rock crevasses, climbing easy-angled slabs, as well as endless opportunities to stray 'off-route' and clamber over a particularly interesting chunk of limestone; this landscape is never dull.

Castle Basin provided the last guaranteed supply of water, along with fine clusters of the yellow mountain buttercup that grows in sheltered nooks and crannies among the many rock outcrops.

As the day progressed, so did the clouds from the south which threatened to smother our proposed summit campsite in cold, all enveloping clag.

We arrived at the top of the peak with barely a couple of minutes to enjoy the 'view' at the same time as a solitary mountain runner who'd just 'jogged up from Courthouse Flat' in the afternoon. As a grey pall of cloud descended abruptly over the summit plateau, the unanimous decision was to bail to the comfort of Granity Pass Hut; even a crowded hut is a better option when the weather turns nasty.

New Year's Eve, but the purists were all abed before 10 and we felt slightly guilty downing our 'wee dram'. Even this failed to be sufficiently soporific to drown out the snores of the uber-fit runner, dispelling the myth that it's only the overweight and unfit that snore.

The first day of the year dawned bright and promising, the slight glitches in our plans being that A) we were not camped on top of Mt Owen as planned, B) our car was in the Owen Valley on the south side of the massif and C) we were on the north side of the range. Studying the map over a leisurely breakfast revealed a possible route back that didn't involve either the long and forested Fyffe River or a long and risky hitchhike back to our car from Courthouse Flat.

The Lookout Range runs immediately to

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK



the east of the Owen Plateau, and offers seemingly straightforward travel along the tops before an abrupt descent back to the Owen River car park. Glossing through the book at Granity Pass Hut this seemed to be the road less travelled, as I couldn't find any reference to any parties heading along this range. The days were long and new territory is always enticing, so we set off over scrub-covered Granity Pass and along the eroded slip face above the headwaters of Granity River. Here, the route is quite vague, as several deep guts cut into the steep slopes that run down from limestone bluffs overhead, but occasional old permolat markers and the odd mossy cairn brought us out to the broad saddle between the Owen and Granity rivers.

Once above the bushline, the panorama opened dramatically and for the rest of the day we were treated to uninterrupted vistas across to the Owen Massif, while we strug-

gled with the incessant cold, gusty sou'west wind that refused to abate.

The Lookout Range offers a stark contrast to the marble mountain to the west. These broad, undulating tops consist of frost-shattered, dazzling white granite screes with occasional weathered tors decorating the smooth ridgelines. We made what seemed to be good progress, despite the energy-draining cold wind, but the Lookout Range didn't give up easily. The ups and downs were never more than 200m but the new day of the New Year wore on and it was late afternoon before I started looking for a way off the windswept ridge into the forested valley below.

I am always happier above the bush line, so it was with a degree of trepidation that I plunged off the open ridge and straight into stunted and twisted dwarf beech, vainly trying to keep to a preset bearing that looked so easy on the map while in the sunshine

above. The scrubby forest soon gave way to mature stands of beech, with an almost bearable amount of undergrowth to bash through and we even started to enjoy the rapid downhill progress we were making. Nevertheless, there was more than 800m of this to cope with before reaching the farm track, and inevitably we were lured into deep little creeks that appeared out of nowhere on this endlessly steep sided ridge.

Not long before our efforts were overtaken by darkness, we were abruptly ejected from the forest's grip onto open grassland, with bemused sheep eyeing us warily as we cooled off burning feet in a nearby creek. The Owen River Pub was beckoning after nearly 12 hours on the go, and although the kitchen had closed by the time we arrived, the understanding owners soon rustled up a fine meal, eaten with the returned rain hammering down outside. **W**



Mt Owen massif from the Lookout Range



WILD FILE

Access From the end of Owen Valley East Road, off SH5

Grade Moderate

Time Car park to Lake Bulmer, 5-6hr; Lake Bulmer to Granity Pass Hut, 7-8hr; Granity Pass Hut to car park via Lookout Range, 11-13hr

Accommodation Camping; Granity Pass Hut, 12 bunks

Map BR23, BR24



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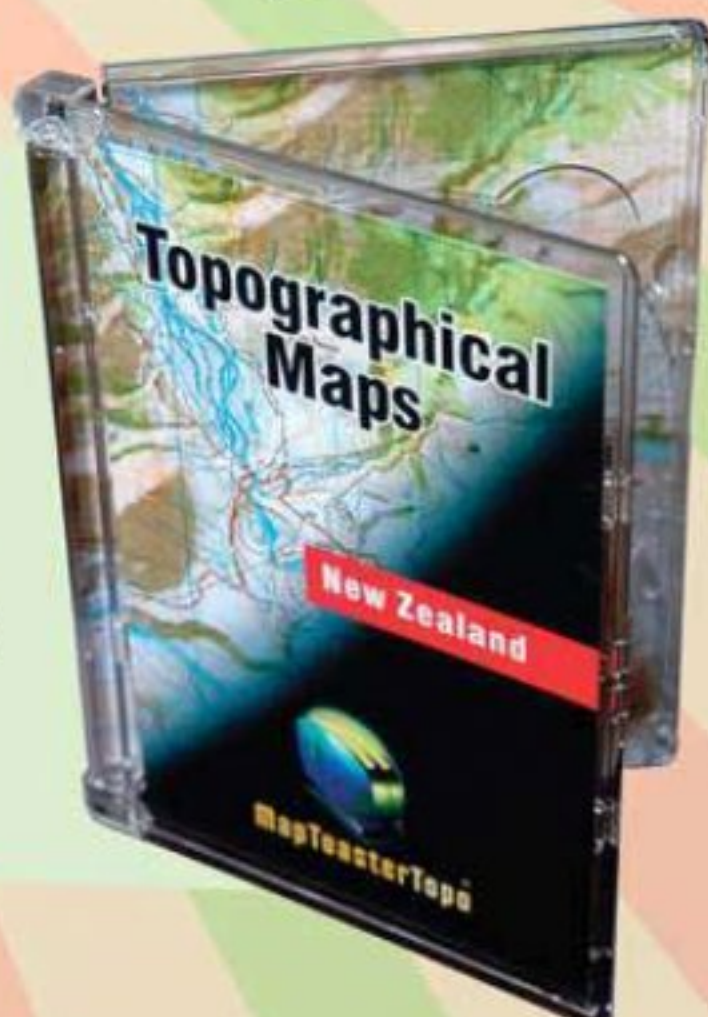
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FOLLOW THE LEADER OR SHOULD WE?

Barbara Morris wonders whether trip leaders are always necessary

“I’m glad to be here, but I’ll be gladder when I’m not,” murmured one of my companions as we hauled ourselves out of the river in the half-dark and on to the track, still a long way from our vehicle.

What had sounded like an idyllic ramble down the Hinemaiaia River in the Kaimanawa Ranges had turned into an energy-sapping hours-long obstacle course of logs and wind-throw on a river where the water level was not as low as we had expected. To make matters worse, we had lost three of our party who, on the leader’s instructions, had climbed out of the river into shoulder-high bush in an effort to find an elusive track.

With the aid of torches we stumbled through the bush, eventually making the road-end. The unlucky trio spent a cold night out, huddling together for warmth.

Our post-tramp discussion highlighted a few points where we could have done better.

We agreed that splitting the party was not a great idea – particularly as no real commitment had been made to reunite if the scouts didn’t find the track. Some of us admitted to feeling uneasy about this split, but had not voiced this at the time.

More information about the state of the river would have helped, so the higher water level and amount of flood debris might not have been such a surprise – possibly leading to a decision not to do the tramp. Instead, we happily put our faith in our leader, an experienced bushman, and it really didn’t occur to us that things might turn to custard.

All this led me to think about what we expect of leaders when we head outdoors,



Briefing a group before starting out ensures everyone knows the route and who is responsible for what

and does every tramping or walking group need to have someone in charge?

With informal online meet-up tramping groups or small groups of friends heading off into the bush, the role of a leader may be non-existent and the group works on the basis of self-responsibility or shared accountability.

In some ways, this is not bad: had we taken a little more responsibility to scrutinise our leader’s decisions and voiced our concerns about splitting the party, our mates might not have become lost. And leaders will often welcome support and input into the decision-making process as, however experienced, they are not immune to making a wrong judgement call when under pressure.

On the other hand, there are times when having a leader to take charge in a difficult situation is necessary. Otherwise, the result could be confusion and loss of valuable time.

There is likely to be a middle ground between the formal structure of tramping clubs with designated leaders – some well

trained, others not so well versed in leadership skills – and a group of friends out for a tramp who feel no particular need for someone to be in charge.

It really comes down to what works best for your group. However, the outcome should be a safe return for all at the end of a good day out. This is usually achieved if the conditions and proposed route are checked and discussed with the group, the weather forecast is known, a map carried, and the group knows and takes into account the tramping ability of their mates.

Things can go wrong and tramping is not without risk, which is why many of us enjoy it. But if the worst happens, can the group honestly say they did everything possible to ensure a safe time for all? No one wants a report card from officialdom that says ‘Could have done better’.

- Barbara Morris is a Taupo trumper and has served on the Federated Mountain Clubs executive and the Taupo Tongariro Conservation Board

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Glenda Rowlands
on Tane Mahuta (26)
Mangorewa Gorge
Photo: Kerry Crawford

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NO ROOM FOR CRY BABIES

When it comes to getting enough sleep in a front country hut, you really have to just hope for the best, writes **Jo Stilwell**

I like nothing more than to wrap myself in my familiar-smelling sleeping bag as I settle in for a solid, well-deserved sleep after a hard day's walk.

I enjoy winter when it's dark at 5pm and the nights are long, and equally I appreciate summer when I can lay my foam mat amongst the tussock and read until 9pm without my headlamp before falling asleep under a starry night sky.

But there is one thing that can be guaranteed about tramping and sleep – if I choose to stay in large, popular, front-country huts I know my sleep will be compromised.

This was the situation for a correspondent to *Wilderness*, whose letter was published in the June 2014 issue. He'd experienced a sleepless night in the popular Woolshed Creek Hut in Canterbury, being woken a dozen times by a family with a 12-week-old and a toddler. He suggested that people with such young children really shouldn't stay in huts, and was incensed that the parents hadn't offered an apology in the morning.

But even I, who am more precious about my sleep than most, cannot agree with the sentiments expressed. As a parent of teenagers, I have great admiration for parents who take such young children into the hills. Their children would have required carrying, both would have been in nappies, and I suspect adding a tent to this load was impossible. Choosing an easily accessible hut such as Woolshed Creek makes total sense to me.

I have been part of a tramping group to Woolshed Creek Hut comprising six adults and nine kids. With a group this size we were not a quiet party; with excited children, rustling sleeping bags and numerous night-time visits to the loo, I didn't get a good sleep, but then I didn't expect to either. On another trip to the same hut we were two

families with five kids aged between three and nine. Once again I had what I call a typical, hut sleep: hot, noisy and broken.

Children, babies and toddlers aren't the only cause of sleepless nights in a hut.



Woolshed Creek Hut is a great destination for families

Hunters sometimes come and go at all hours, photographers are up before dawn for the perfect sunrise shot and then there are snorers – at least babies will be quiet at some stage during the night, something which cannot be said for snorers.

I'm not even sure parents should apologise for the noise their children make during the night. I've never heard a snorer or a hunter apologise for the disruption they cause.

And I don't expect an apology from the tramping party starting their thunderous cooker because they want an early departure. I just know when visiting popular huts to never expect the same quality sleep I might get in my tent or in a six-bunker in the middle of nowhere.

My good friend Margaret tells a story about a trip to Fenella Hut in Kahurangi National Park with her then 12-month-old daughter, Rata. They ended up moving their mattresses to the porch in the middle of the night for some peace and quiet, as a snoring hut companion was so loud sleep was impossible. Not a peep from Rata though. Rata also visited Pinnacles Hut in the Coromandel at eight weeks old and slept soundly between her parents with breastfeeds during the night as necessary. On another trip to Jumbo Hut in the Tararua, this time as a four-month-old, Rata impressed the full hut of trampers with another long, sound sleep. Yes, the trampers did look concerned when the parents arrived with a young baby, but probably no more concerned than they would have, had a fellow trumper arrived with the word 'Snorer' stamped on their forehead.

When staying in busy huts, you need to hope for the best from your unknown hut companions, but be prepared to take what comes. It isn't appropriate to have rules about who should or shouldn't be allowed to stay in public tramping huts.

Large, easily accessible huts are perfect for family trips with kids of any age, but are especially important for parents who are carrying babies and toddlers.

We weren't brave enough to venture off on an overnight tramp with our children when one was just 12 weeks old and the other still a toddler. But had we been, I think Woolshed Creek Hut would have been a fine destination. **W**



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WILD
HUTS

FAST DEALS *AND* BANKRUPT TRAMPERS

Which hut would be Mayfair and which would be Old Kent Road? **Ricky French** plays the inaugural game of Tararua Tramping Monopoly and it's a true nail biter



No wonder Maungahuka Hut is the most sought-after Tramping Monopoly location

SHAUN BARNETT/BLACK ROBIN PHOTOGRAPHY

To casual observers we are a close-knit, un-materialistic Wellington tramping family. We live and tramp modestly, save for the occasional skinny-dip in a tarn. But the time has come to reveal my family's secret capitalist obsession.

When not huddled around a campfire you'll more than likely find us huddled around the kitchen table at my grandma's place, buying and selling our way to an imagined fortune in a game of Monopoly. It's a game we've played for years. We usually start after dinner, and before anyone notices, it's midnight and there's still no winner. It's a chaotic experience. Not for the meek. Tears are shed, dreams shattered. To the victor goes ultimate bragging rights, to the loser goes the kettle to make the next cup of tea.



The green properties make loads of money

I'd always thought I'd like to make a personalised Monopoly board, and after discovering that Hasbro, the makers of Monopoly, for a short time allowed you to design your own board (which they would

manufacture and send to you), I experienced a rare 'lightbulb' moment. Yes, I would design Tararua Tramping Monopoly. No, it wouldn't be easy.

The research and development phase commenced. I had to decide what the properties would be. I knew I wanted them to be Tararua huts, but I had a problem. It would require players to build houses and hotels on the huts, which didn't make sense. Luckily, my Monopoly-honed capitalist side provided an answer. Yes, the aim would be to establish intensive development in the Tararuas. Stack apartments and resorts in the bush, upon every hut-site. Bankrupt the casual tramper and send them out into the cold. Think of the benefit to the country in tourism dollars and attracting a better class of tramper. Imagine the reward of hauling yourself over the Tararua Peaks and



Kerry and Bruce battle it out

Maungahuka Hut surrounded with holiday homes and casinos.

Logistical problem solved, next task was to rank and price the huts: the fun part. Which hut would end up on the prized 'Mayfair' spot? Which would hang its head in shame as the cheapest and nastiest?

The answer to the latter was easy: Waio-tauru Hut. Cursed by its road end-accessible location, it has been treated as a rubbish dump by four-wheel driving hoons. This rundown, cheerless shelter seems overpriced at \$2 rent a visit. Ancient, humble Cone Hut may justifiably feel aggrieved at being paired with Waio-tauru.

Playing God was fun, but I needed some structure to my rankings. Yes, the newer, flashier huts would generally rank higher, but I would also consider location, views, character, notoriety and personal connections. I got back to work.

Penn Creek Hut, Parawai Lodge and Nichols Hut make up the affordable light blue strip. Parawai Lodge may seem an odd choice for inclusion, but it has been home to us on many stays, especially when indoctrinating young children to tramping. The purple huts were

NEIL FORKS HUT failed to make the board due to it being inconveniently fully occupied the last time we visited in January. **YES, THE SELECTION PROCESS WAS CRUEL.**

Arete, Te Matawai and Field. I situated Arete near jail, as we had once used it as a get-out-of-jail-free card when caught in a blizzard during a Northern Crossing attempt.

Monopoly veterans will know that the shrewdest properties to buy are the orange. They get landed on more than any others, due

to their position one roll from jail, the most commonly landed-on square. So which huts deserve to be landed on?

Sayer Hut certainly does. We were there not long ago and our previous entry from three years back was still in the hut book, just a few pages earlier. Lift your game, trampers. It has everything a hut needs, which is very little, except an environment for trampers to feel at home in and create their own memories. A hut really does feel like your own once you've swept the rat droppings from the sink and stacked the kindling. On the Monopoly board it sat there awaiting hotels. Dreams are free.

North and South Ohau huts round off the orange, the only geographical pairing on the board. North Ohau Hut would play a historic part in the inaugural game, which we'll learn about soon.

I felt it was important that Elder Hut was on the board. It's a young hut, but we saw it when it was a mere embryo. Unable to reach our destination of Renata Hut after a trip over the tops we stumbled upon Elder Hut under construction, with only its deck having been completed. Improvising with saw horses and a tarp, we made a shelter and bivvied the night



away. Like the real thing, the Monopoly version of Elder Hut has a fantastic location just round the corner from Free Parking. Popular Jumbo Hut and the remote Mid Waiohine Hut complete the red team. Mid Waiohine gets the only spelling mistake on the board (Wiohine!); making it a rare and prized collector's item.

Yellow sees things getting swanky. Roaring Stag Lodge gets the call-up, the sole representative from the north-eastern side of the range. Tarn Ridge and Dorset Ridge Hut are both prized for their views. They rank higher than other similar tops huts like Jumbo and Elder due to their location in the thick of the ranges. A worthy addition to any player's property portfolio.

The Tararuas' best and biggest riverside huts come together in lush, native green: Totara Flats and Waitewaewae. These are seriously popular destinations, offering front door access to the Waiohine and Otaki Rivers. Expect to pay around \$300 for freehold.

From the best of the river huts to the best of the tops huts: Maungahuka. There's no easy way to reach Maungahuka, and no easy way out. We got trapped there once by gale winds, unable to continue along the tops and eventually forced down to Neil Forks Hut, which failed to make the board due to it being inconveniently fully occupied the last time we visited in January. Yes, the selection process was cruel.

Which only leaves dark blue, the prime Monopoly real estate. Powell justifiably claims top spot. It's the most popular hut in the ranges; the Mayfair of huts, the go-to hut for tourism brochures, should tourism brochures for the Tararuas ever be made.

Kime's exceptional ranking is more controversial. Certainly the old Kime would slip further down the board; its frigid temperature keeping demand lukewarm at best. The new Kime Hut though must surely take pride of place alongside Powell. It's the main Southern Crossing hut, highest in the ranges, destination for so many weekend tramps, launchpad to

Cone Hut and Waiotauru, cheap and cheerful and a renovator's delight!


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WILD HUTS



Mt Hector, vault of Tararua history. It also very probably saved my life once.

What about the railway stations? Which train lines serve the Tararuas? The answer is none. So railway stations became road ends. Kaitoke, Holdsworth Lodge, Poads Road and Otaki Forks. Easy.

Hasbro wouldn't personalise the Community Chest and Chance cards, but I felt we needed to create our own luck, so to speak. So I chucked out the standard cards and made some tramping-related ones, such as, 'Your torch doesn't work, stumble blindly to nearest hut'. And: 'You over-pack: pay each player \$40 to carry your food'.

We gathered for the inaugural game in Waikanae on a typically rainy January night. First hut to be bought in the history of Tararua Tramping Monopoly was North Ohau. Bruce, ably supported by my son, Dorian, snapped it up. It proved a popular spot, too. Players tramped into North Ohau all night. Probably because it gets the sun till late.

Kerry tramped light and quick, buying up the light blue and staying out of trouble. Our family is notoriously reluctant to do 'deals' and allow others to gain a set of colours, but after a couple of hours, much shouting and badgering, monopolies were established and houses went up. My young partner Finley and I negotiated our way to acquiring the purple set, while Bruce and Dorian traded red for orange, but were cash-poor and couldn't build houses quickly enough. North Ohau's steady but paltry rent-only return couldn't save them and they were the first bankrupted.

Kerry was bringing in the bucks from light blue, but would it be enough for her to land the killer blow? Karen controlled yellow, but had few visitors and succumbed during a stay at Penn Creek, a hut not normally noted with bankruptcy. Nina, as is her wont, frustrated the game by refusing to deal, and by intentionally knocking houses over with each roll of the dice. No one was sad to see her bowl out shortly after 11pm. That left two: Kerry against Finley and I. Kerry's hotels on light blue were providing

a steady income. She also owned most other huts on the board and had a mountain of cash the size of Girdlestone. But I wasn't worried. I surveyed the situation and whispered to Finley, "We're going to win this game."

It was simply a matter of time. We owned purple and orange, having bankrupted Bruce and Dorian and inheriting their huts. Both colours were higher-returning than light blue, and I knew if the game kept going long enough Kerry would land on us more than we would land on her, and her cash would dwindle away, slow at first, then faster as we consolidated with more houses. She would go down like the Titanic. Her only hope was to build on green, which she had recently taken over from the ousted Nina. But it didn't look like she was interested in sully the unspoiled environs of the Otaki River, Main Range or Waiohine River Valley with tacky development. Her quest to uphold the conservation values of the Tararuas was noble, but it could just cost her the game.

Unaware of her impending doom, she calmly did laps of the board, paying frequent and welcome visits to Arete Hut, Sayer, and of course the ever-popular North Ohau. Her overconfidence extended to paying to get out of jail rather than rolling the dice and staying safely behind bars. It was all going to plan. Until Bruce dropped a bombshell.

The game would end at midnight, a mere 20 minutes away. We had to act fast. We established four houses on each of the orange, and hotels on all the purple. Kerry must have had tired legs, as she called in at one of our huts on every trip round the board. Her pile of cash was fast vanishing as ours was mounting and for the first time she

looked worried.

She acted. One house each went up on her green block. That was ok: one house wouldn't be enough to hurt us. Again she landed on orange and I estimated we were about even on money now. Ten minutes to go. We stumbled into Nichols Hut. Damn! \$550 handed over. Kerry back in front. It was set up for a classic Monopoly finish.

Immediately we hit back, snaring Kerry on Elder Hut. Kerry was feeling the heat, sweating a little and struggling to add up the numbers on the dice. Our pile of cash was now significantly higher than hers. The smart money was with us. Two minutes to go, and our roll. We hit Chance and prayed for luck. We didn't get any.

Make general repairs to your huts: pay \$47 for each house and \$97 for each hotel. It was the worst card to get – a game changer. Bruce did the sums. We were hit for \$855, enough to bring Kerry back into the game, and time was up. Looking over at Kerry's cash I judged she was now probably winning. I was shattered. But the game was to deliver one final twist. Bruce announced Kerry must take her final turn. Seven heads preened over the board as her sweaty hands cupped the dice. Her counter was on Parawai Lodge. Six of our huts had their doors open, just round the corner. I liked those odds. She threw a seven, and tapped out her final, fatal paces to the front steps of none other than North Ohau Hut. Kerry was ruined; her fatal mistake was failing to diversify her hut portfolio until it was too late. A lesson for all trampers. Victory in the world's first game of Tararua Tramping Monopoly was ours. And it was sweet. **W**



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Hinapouri Tarn is a little known lake just below the ever-popular Lake Angelus

21 RANGER SECRETS

No-one knows the conservation estate better than the rangers who work it, explore it and live in it day after day. **Matthew Pike** convinces some of them to reveal their favourite hideaways – the special spots that calm the nerves or drop the jaw. Here's what he uncovered....

ALPINE IDYLL

**Hinapouri Tarn, Nelson Lakes National Park |
RANGER: Martin Rodd**

Lake Angelus deserves its popularity. The vision of the lake, hut and steep sided alpine summits is one of such outstanding beauty it attracts thousands of visitors over the summer.

What most people don't know is that, less than an hour's walk from the lake, is another alpine tarn in an equally beautiful environment – but pack a tent and the likelihood is you'll have it all to yourself.

It's a rough sidle down the scree slope to Hinapouri Tarn, but once you're there you feel a million miles from anywhere, says Rodd. "When you're in the basin you can't see any human modifications at all – just a spectacular alpine environment.

"It's just a hop, skip and jump from Angelus Hut, but you'd have no idea it was so close. It's a little gem of its own with a smaller, more close-up feel. And when you get to the southern side you see a beautiful cascade running down the hill into the tarn."

Time 14hr return **Grade** Moderate



Moturua Island (right) and Motukiekie Island

LABA KAY PHOTOGRAPHY

ISLAND SANCTUARY

Moturua Island, Bay of Islands | **RANGER:** Helen Ough Dealy

Right in the middle of the Bay of Islands is a must-see island on a kayak trip around the archipelago. Moturua Island has sandy beaches, a stunning round-walk and is home to an enormous number of native birds, thanks to it being part of Project Island Song.

The island is unrecognisable from five years ago when predators ran free. Now,

the burgeoning wildlife has created an interactive experience.

“It has just had the North Island robin reintroduced, which is doing very well,” says Ough Dealy. “When you get near to the island you can hear the bird song – I was on a boat 200m off shore, played the North Island robin song, and they sang back to me.

“These birds go right up to you. It’s an intimate experience. The island’s in the middle of the archipelago and the walk gives you great vistas out to sea and over the islands.”

There’s no camping on the island, though nearby Urupukapuka Island has three campsites at which you can stay.

Time 2.5hr walk **Grade** Easy

DRAMATIC EROSION

Pyramid Stream, Egmont National Park | **RANGER:** Dave Rogers

The eroding Pyramid
Stream from above


RODNEY ALLEN

The almost-perfect conical shape of Mt Taranaki is a sure-fire clue that, geologically speaking, it’s an infant volcano. Another clue is the rapid rate of erosion, particularly on its western side. Nowhere can this be seen more dramatically than Pyramid Stream – or, to be more precise, Pyramid Gorge.

Every time there’s a significant rainfall (and that’s pretty common in this part of the country) big lahars swoop down the hillside taking a significant chunk of the brittle mountain with them.

Hear the mournful
sound of the kokako
on Kohukohunui



MATT BIRNS, CREATIVE COMMONS

RARE TREAT

Kohukohunui, Hunua Regional
Park | **RANGER:** Ali Meade

Hearing the mournful song of a kokako is one of the most beautiful and haunting experiences in the New Zealand bush. It's also one that's now extremely rare, as the species is so vulnerable to predators.

But there's one spot close to Auckland where you have a very good chance of hearing the eerie cry. That's on the highest summit in the mainland Auckland region: Kohukohunui, 688m.

The peak has a platform at the top with views of Hauraki Gulf islands, the Coromandel Peninsula and surrounding forest. It can be reached as part of a long day walk to and from Waha-

rau Regional Park, but Meade recommends staying overnight.

"There's a campsite on Mangatangi Ridge Track, where it crosses the stream, called Thousand Acres Camping Ground," she says. "If you get up early in the morning and walk up to the summit you're far more likely to hear the kokako than in the middle of the day."

In 1994 there was only one breeding pair in the park but the latest survey counted 59 pairs thanks to intensive predator control carried out by Auckland Regional Council. Most of the pairs live around, and west of, the summit.

Time 6-9hr **Grade** Moderate

In the last five years alone the gorge has extended a further 2.5km up the mountainside and it's now starting to eat into the lower slopes of the landmark known as Little Pyramid.

"Once it consumes the Pyramids it will be in to the steeper western scree slopes and will quickly make its way to the summit," says Rogers. "This is something we are likely to witness in our lifetime."

The quick erosion created a headache for DOC, which had to constantly re-evaluate the path of the Round the Mountain Track. In the end, it settled for bringing

it down to bush level, so as not to send trampers into high alpine conditions.

So, where's the best place to see this natural phenomenon? "From the air, if you can," says Rogers. "Failing that, you can walk up the Kahui Track then head across to the Pyramids from there. This will take around 3-4hr to walk in and another 2½-3hr to come out."

"I wouldn't recommend walking up the stream. There are huge cliffs 20m high and you can see and hear them collapsing all around you."

Time 5-7hr **Grade** Moderate

MEINDL

MEINDL'S

AWESOME

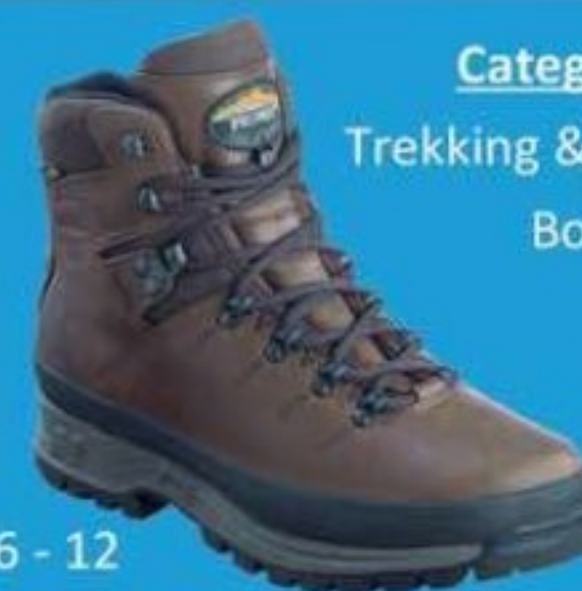
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Experience raw power
at Tree Trunk Gorge

ROB BROWN

RAW POWER

Tree Trunk Gorge, Kaimanawa Forest Park | RANGER: Harry Keys

A powerful experience for those heading along SH1, east of Tongariro National Park, is to stop at Tree Trunk Gorge. It's just five minutes from the main road and another five-minute leg-stretch to the fantastic sight of water gushing through a narrow gap just inches from where you're standing.

Park your car just before the bridge over the Tongariro River on Tree Trunk Gorge Road. A track (not signposted) on the true left of the river leads down to the gorge almost underneath the bridge. First, head through vegetation which has been clearly trimmed by previous floods.

"Below the vegetation the track drops into a big amphitheatre," says Keys. "It's a big empty space with water-worn lava. Go as far as you can along the river where the water thunders down only a metre away from you – it's very powerful. The whole place is very impressive."

"It's a neat local gem, but if you're accident prone, don't go there because there's no fence and if you fall, you die."

Time 10min **Grade** Easy

ICE AGE REMNANT

Monument, Fiordland National Park | RANGER: Ken Bradley

Protruding from the shores of Lake Manapouri is a striking little summit, formed as the core of an ice whirlpool. Quite how it survived the glacial attack is uncertain but those who make the climb are pleased it did.

It can be seen from many spots in Manapouri township but a kayak or boat is needed to reach it. There's a useful portage, where it takes 10 minutes to wheel your kayak over from Surprise Bay to George Bay. Then Monu-

ment rises steeply from Rawiri Bay.

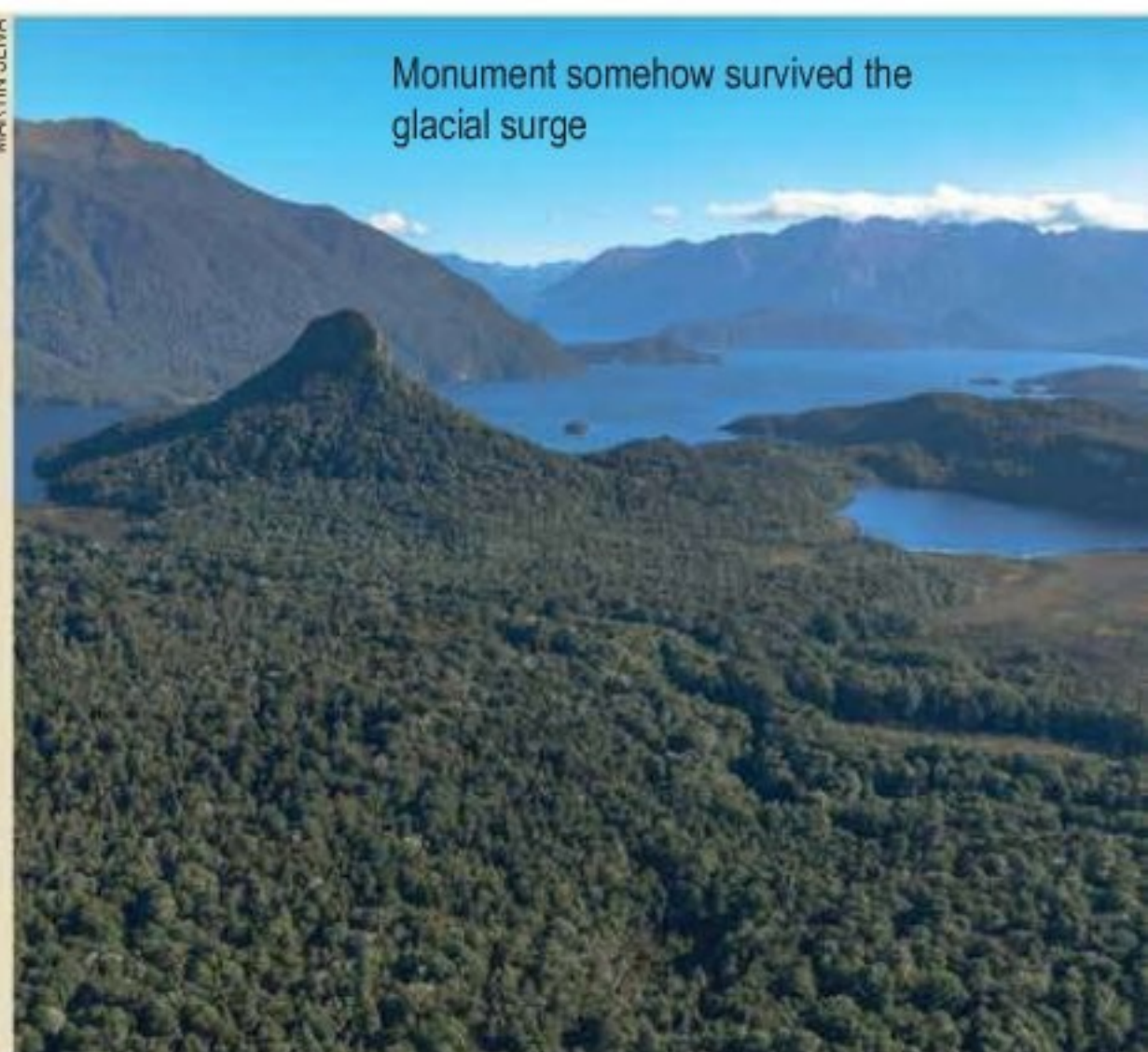
"It's a neat place to kayak because there are a lot of inlets and the portage trail is really handy," says Bradley. "The climb is up a marked route, rather than a track."

"There's a wee rock challenge on the way up with a chain to help. There's a great view from the top and a fit person should make it up there in an hour."

Time 4-5hr kayak, 2hr walk

Grade Moderate

MARTIN SILVA


Monument somehow survived the
glacial surge

GRAND LITTLE CANYON

Tephra rocks, Tongariro National Park | RANGER: Harry Keys

Not many people know that New Zealand has its very own mini-Grand Canyon. It's one of the more colourful aspects of the Rangipo Desert. In a region that mostly consists of small shrubs and grey soil, it's hard to imagine an explosion of colour.

But head 6km up the road towards

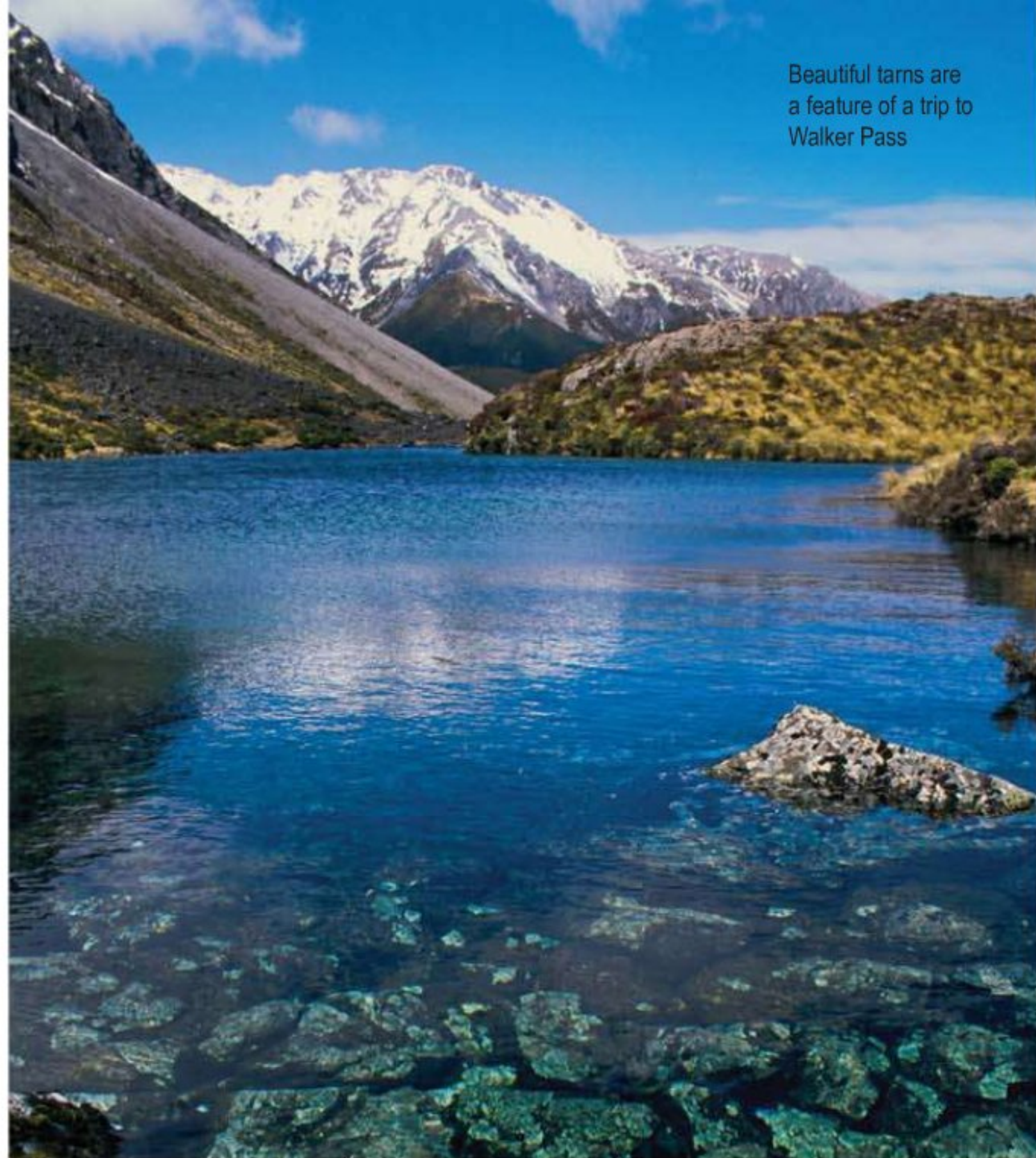
Tukino ski field and you'll see something rather different. Drive as far as the 4WD sign and you've reached the terminal moraine of the Mangatoetoenui Glacier. You can wander through the foothills and admire the tephra layers in the rock, formed by Mt Ruapehu's dramatic volcanic past.

"It's an extreme environment, which

was disturbed by lahars in an eruption 400 years ago during a very active phase of Ruapehu's history," explains Keys.

"Over the years the rock has eroded into small, gently sloped landforms and consists of orange and brown layers of sand and pebbles. It's only vertical to 5m and is a very colourful place."

Time 10min **Grade** Easy



Beautiful tarns are a feature of a trip to Walker Pass

PAT BARRETT

MOUNTAINS, TARNs AND WILDLIFE

Walker Pass, Arthur's Pass National Park | **RANGER: Sandy Tong**

A blend of snow-capped mountains, gorgeous tarns and a chance to spot or hear several of the country's rarest species, makes the track to Walker Pass a superb overnight trip.

From Hawdon Hut, 3hr up valley from the road end, it's a 30min trip from beech forest up Twin Fall Stream to alpine habitat and 2hr to the pass itself.

"You'll walk alongside a meandering stream through subalpine scrub dwarfed

by raw and majestic snow-capped mountains," says Tong. "There are various large tarns along this route with plenty of flowering Mt Cook lilies in November. There are also impressive stands of the Dr Seuss lookalike tree, mountain neinei."

A trap line along the route has helped protect vulnerable species in the valley, including the whio/blue duck, great spotted kiwi, rock wren and the extremely rare orange fronted parakeet.

Time 10hr **Grade** Moderate



New Zealand's miniature Grand Canyon?

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A kayaker enjoys the calm waters of North Mavora Lake

HOLIDAY TOWN'S HOLIDAY LAKE

Mavora Lakes, Mavora Lakes Park | **RANGER:** Sinead Mulhern

Forty years ago it could take up to a day to drive from Te Anau to South Mavora Lake and the much larger North Mavora Lake. These days, the trip can be made in 40min and in summer the locals love to camp there and kayak on the water.

"It's stunning to drive in there," says Mulhern. "After passing kilometres of rolling farmland you turn off the road

and drive through native bush, catching glimpses of sparkling water through the trees.

"Then suddenly you pop out of the bush and this magnificent vista opens up in front of you; beautiful rolling tussock and blue water with the Livingstone and Thompson mountains standing guard on either side."

The region has its own micro-climate

that's far more akin to Otago's weather patterns, than Fiordland's.

The Mararoa River, north of the northern lake, has plenty of trout and keen trampers can head north along the Mavora Walkway all the way to the Greenstone, Caples and Routeburn tracks. The stretch of river between the two lakes also offers a fun, gentle kayak trip.

Time Accessed from road **Grade** Easy

BAD WEATHER GETAWAY

Makarora Hut, Mt Aspiring National Park | **RANGER:** Simon Mazzotti

Much of Mt Aspiring National Park is well known. Last year *Wilderness* readers voted it as their favourite park and the likes of Liverpool Hut, French Ridge Hut, Mt Brewster and Cascade Saddle are classics.

But there are plenty of lesser-trodden valleys if you look closely enough. One of those is the Makarora Valley off the Haast

Pass Highway.

Access is from a track beginning at Kiwi Flat (if the river is low, a short cut from Davis Flat is possible). Just six hours upstream is the little Forestry Service-built Makarora Hut – a quick getaway for Mazzotti.

"It's my overnight escape," he says. "It's removed from everything in an accessible sense. For me, it's about not seeing evi-

dence of humans and, apart from the hut, that's exactly what you get in this valley.

"If you're planning an alpine trip up Mt Brewster, say, and the weather's not good, then this is a great alternative. It's not a first-timer walk but is a good trumper's track not used very often. It's certainly an alpine environment and it's very sheltered too."

Time 12hr return **Grade** Moderate

LOSE THE CROWDS IN ABEL TASMAN

Falls River, Abel Tasman National Park
RANGER: Martin Rodd

An excellent side trip while walking or kayaking the Abel Tasman Coast Track is a lesser-known track that heads inland to Falls River.

Falls River Track starts from the far western corner of Torrent Bay, following Tregidga Creek, before rising over a small hill and dropping to Falls River itself.

"The cascading river provides multiple amazing swimming holes as you hop your way up to a spectacular series of waterfalls," says Rodd. His favourite spot of all is the final swimming hole you can reach upstream without needing more specialist gear.

"Boulder hop up the river until you reach an obvious swimming hole at the base of a waterfall – it's great for swimming," says Rodd. "If you're doing the Coast Track, leave your



ABEL TASMAN CANYONS

The perfect spot for a dip

packs at Anchorage Hut and head there for a half-day return trip."

Top tip: make sure you go at low tide, or the walk will be considerably longer.

"This trip gives you a real feel for this section of river and gets you into mature forest undamaged by previous forest burning which affected most of the park."

Time 3-4hr return from The Anchorage

Grade Easy-moderate

SPECTACULAR KAHURANGI

Mt Luna, Kahurangi National Park | **RANGER:** Martin Rodd

As most who have been there will know, Kahurangi National Park is vast. It's a magnet for trampers who want to experience a world devoid of humans; where you can stand on a summit and see no sign of civilisation.

One such summit, which can be enjoyed over a long weekend, is Mt Luna. Access to the mountain is reasonably straightforward and safe, now that DOC has placed a bridge over Kiwi Stream on the return leg.

Start along the Wangapeka Track until Stone Hut. After a stream crossing, head up the Mt Luna Route into a basin, then on to the tops and the summit of Mt Luna.

"The scenery is spectacular at first light," explains Rodd. "You look into the Karamea on one side and across to Patriarch on the

other. You can't see beyond the park so you get a real sense of remoteness. On Patriarch you feel closer to civilisation."

After making the summit, there's the option to continue east towards Kiwi Saddle Hut. From here, if the weather's good, you can continue back to the car along the tops, via Mt Patriarch and the Arthur Range. Otherwise, DOC's strategic bridge comes into play and trampers can escape back to the Wangapeka Track by heading down Kiwi Stream and crossing close to where it joins the Wangapeka.

"Mt Luna is a walk, not a scramble," says Rodd. "It's classic Kiwi tramping. Two nights would make the trip very comfortable. It can be done as an overnighter but you'll be on your feet for a long time."

Time 2-3 days **Grade** Moderate

PERFECT LOCATION

Lake Christabel, Victoria Forest Park

RANGER: Dave Hawes

Anumber of rangers selected this as their favourite hideaway. Lake Christabel is one of those peaceful places the locals rave about while, at the same time, would rather people didn't know existed.

"It has that X factor," says Hawes. "It's impossible to put your finger on what it is exactly that makes it special."

"The closest I can describe it, is that this place has an aura of peace, tranquility and well being and you absorb that feeling when you spend time there."

The lake is a three-hour walk along Blue Grey River from Palmer Road. Thirty minutes beyond the lake is Lake Christabel Hut.

"On a scale of 1-10 when Christabel is a 10 nothing else ranks above a five," says Hawes. "This is no mean thing, as we work in some pretty nice spots."

Time 6hr **Grade** Moderate

PENINSULA PEAK BAGGING

Mt Sinclair, Banks Peninsula | **RANGER:** Wayne Beggs

Packhorse Hut



CELIA MENDES

Banks Peninsula is teeming with paper roads, many of which have never been formed. One paper road, which was used as an old stock route, has been turned into a walking and mountain bike track, and will soon be part of a three-day trip taking in some of the peninsula's highest points.

The three-day trip will start at Gebbies Pass and trampers can stay at Packhorse Hut, Wai-puna Hut (currently being built) and finish at Montgomery Reserve.

There's a beautiful five-hour stretch called Twin Fencelines Track which goes from West-

ern Valley to Montgomery Reserve. It can be done in a day, of course, but Beggs recommends camping on the northern side of Mt Sinclair.

"You get great views over Mts Fitzgerald and Herbert," he says. "There's no light pollution up there and you can't see houses at that spot, so it has a real wilderness feel."

"There are a few flat spots close to the track that are good for camping and when it's cloudy in Christchurch, and an easterly is blowing, the cloud can rise from Pigeon Bay and spill over the saddle and into the river catchment the other side before burning off. It's a beautiful sight."

Time 5hr **Grade** Easy-moderate

UNBEATABLE VIEWS

Hoophorn-Worryline Traverse, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park

RANGER: Ray Bellringer

Aside from the trip to Mueller Hut and a few shorter tracks, many believe there's little for trampers in mountainous Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park. It's true the park contains plenty to benefit those with climbing ropes and ice axes, but there are also plenty of tramping gems if you know where to look.

One of those is the Hoophorn-Worryline Traverse, a day trip that can be tackled either way from SH80 several kilometres south of Mt Cook Village and includes a saddle at 1460m which offers fine views of the park's highest mountains.

"The views of the likes of Aoraki/Mt Cook and Mt Sefton are great from the saddle because they're more distant, which gives you a greater perspective," says Bellringer.

Another benefit is its weather-beating location: "Further east you tend not to catch the weather and it's often clear, even when it's raining in the village."

From the saddle you can climb to the summit of Mt Hodgkinson, the lowest named peak in the park. There's also good access to Mt Edgar Thomson for climbers.

Head up Birch Hill Stream from SH80 on the true left and follow the stream that veers right towards Point 1488. This is known as the Worryline Stream. From the saddle, head down to Hoophorn Stream and follow it back to SH80, just 4km from where you started.

Time 8hr **Grade** Difficult

ARRIVE FOR SUNSET

Mt Rintoul Hut, Mt Richmond Forest Park | **RANGER:** Martin Rodd

Mt Rintoul



MITCHELL EVERLY

If you're looking for a perfect place to catch the sunset then you could do far worse than spend a night in Mt Rintoul Hut. Situated in one of the harder-to-reach spots of the Richmond Range, the hut's namesake mountain towers above and is a great climb at first light.

Rodd recommends walking in via the Wairoa River Left Branch and out again via Old Man and Mt Starveall for a thoroughly rewarding 2-3 day tramp.

"Rintoul Hut is a six-bunker and always immaculate," says Rodd. "It looks straight out over Mapua, the Arthur Range and Tasman Bay.

Try and catch it when the sun's going down – it's a cool spot."

The trip is more of a route than a track, but heads through a beautiful gorge on the way to Mid Wairoa Hut, after which you're straight on to the tops. "Bishop's Cap has bizarre forest at the edge of ultramafic country and Purple Top is like being on the moon," explains Rodd. "It's a weird landscape."

Rodd says it's a fine-weather trip only. "The first time I did the trip was in the cloud and I couldn't believe what I'd missed when I struck clear skies the second time round."

Time 2-3 days **Grade** Moderate

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REMOTE TARARUAS

Tarn Ridge Hut, Tararua Forest Park

RANGER: Joe Hansen

One of the more hard-to-reach huts in the Tararuas is Tarn Ridge Hut. It's a full day's tramp from the Upper Waingawa Road end and involves negotiating Mitre, the park's highest summit. But the reward for such efforts is a feeling of remoteness rarely experienced on the tops.

"You're in the middle of it all," says



Lonely Tarn Ridge Hut sits sheltered in the Tararua tops

Hansen. "At night you can't see the surrounding townships or any lights – you're surrounded by mountains."

Hansen warns to check the weather forecast before you go. "If the weather

packs in, it's reasonably hard to get back out because you don't want to head over Mitre and the rivers in flood aren't much fun either."

Time 2 days **Grade** Moderate-difficult

WILD RAKIURA COAST

Big Hellfire Beach, Rakiura National Park | RANGER: Phred Dobbins

Rakiura isn't short of wild, untouched locations around its coastline. It's why many choose to visit for epic excursions of a fortnight or more.

But there's one spot ranger Phred Dobbins says is particularly dramatic and a terrific place to spend an evening – although it'll take at least three days to get there.

Big Hellfire Beach lies just off the North West Circuit and the only way to reach it is down a 365m sand shoot (bring your

boogie board if you can bear to carry it all that way).

The beach at the bottom is small, but broken reefs off-shore create an angry scene of white water and the loud crash of waves, which the reef helps to mellow by the time they reach shore.

"You're quite safe, even though you look up at huge pounding waves," says Dobbins. "It's a small golden sandy beach surrounded by cliffs. It's a rough spot but that's part of its beauty – you experience

the raw power of the ocean.

"There's also a rock cave/overhang at the southern end of the beach with a small rock protruding from the ceiling that looks like a skull, which is a bit spooky."

The beach is also at the perfect angle for enjoying sunsets before making the painful ascent back up the sand to Big Hellfire Hut.

From Halfmoon Bay it takes around three days to reach clockwise or five-six days anti-clockwise.

Time 8-9 days **Grade** Moderate

ISOLATED ARCH

The Hole in the Hill, Charleston | RANGER: John Reid

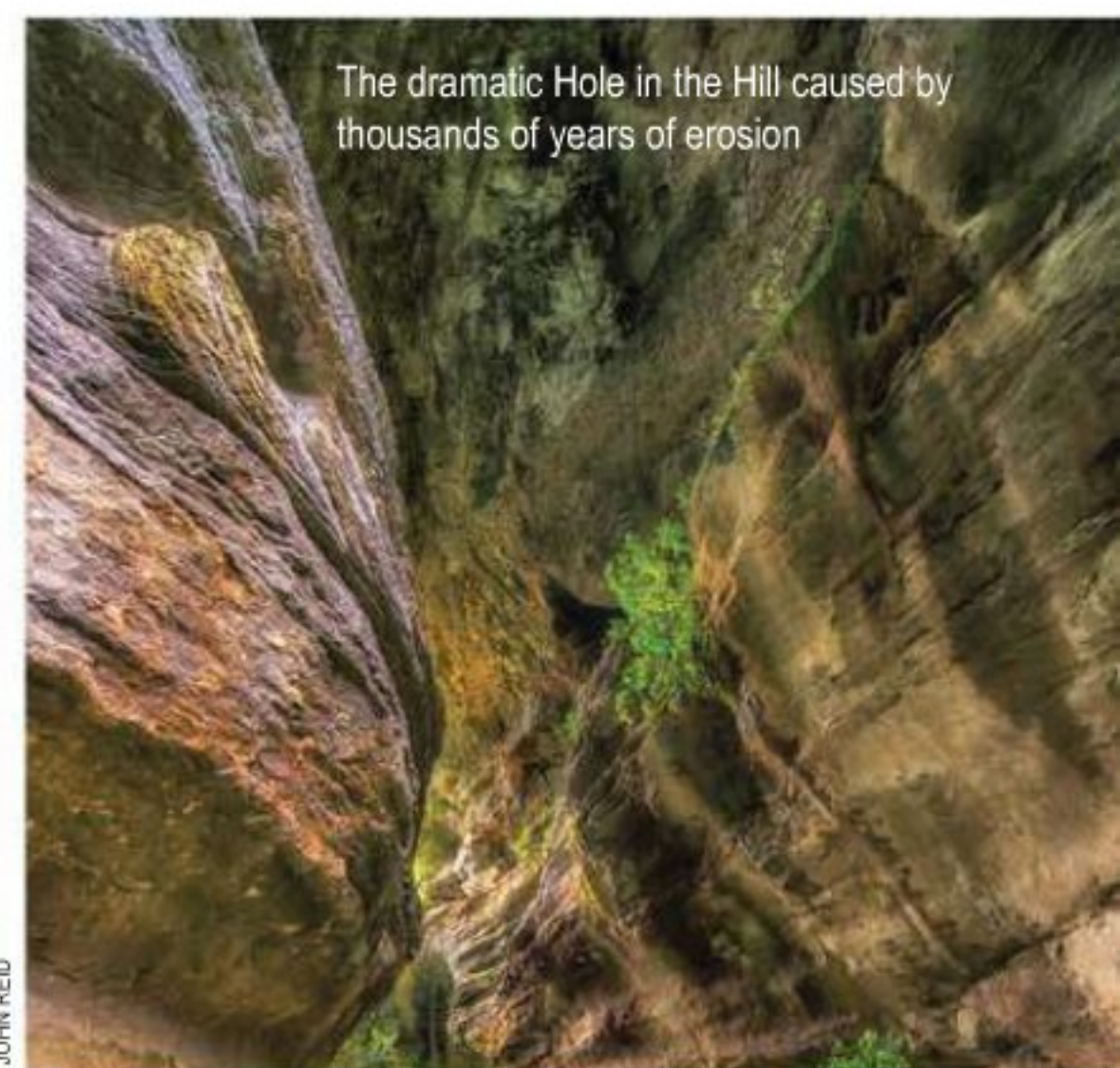
Think archways on the West Coast and most people think Oparara. But there's another further down the coast which is not signposted and has no proper track, but which Reid believes is even more interesting than its better known cousin.

The Hole in the Hill only takes around an hour to reach from Darkies Terrace Rd, if you know where you're going. The trip starts along a forestry road but soon requires

good navigation skills and an ability to avoid sink holes to reach the target.

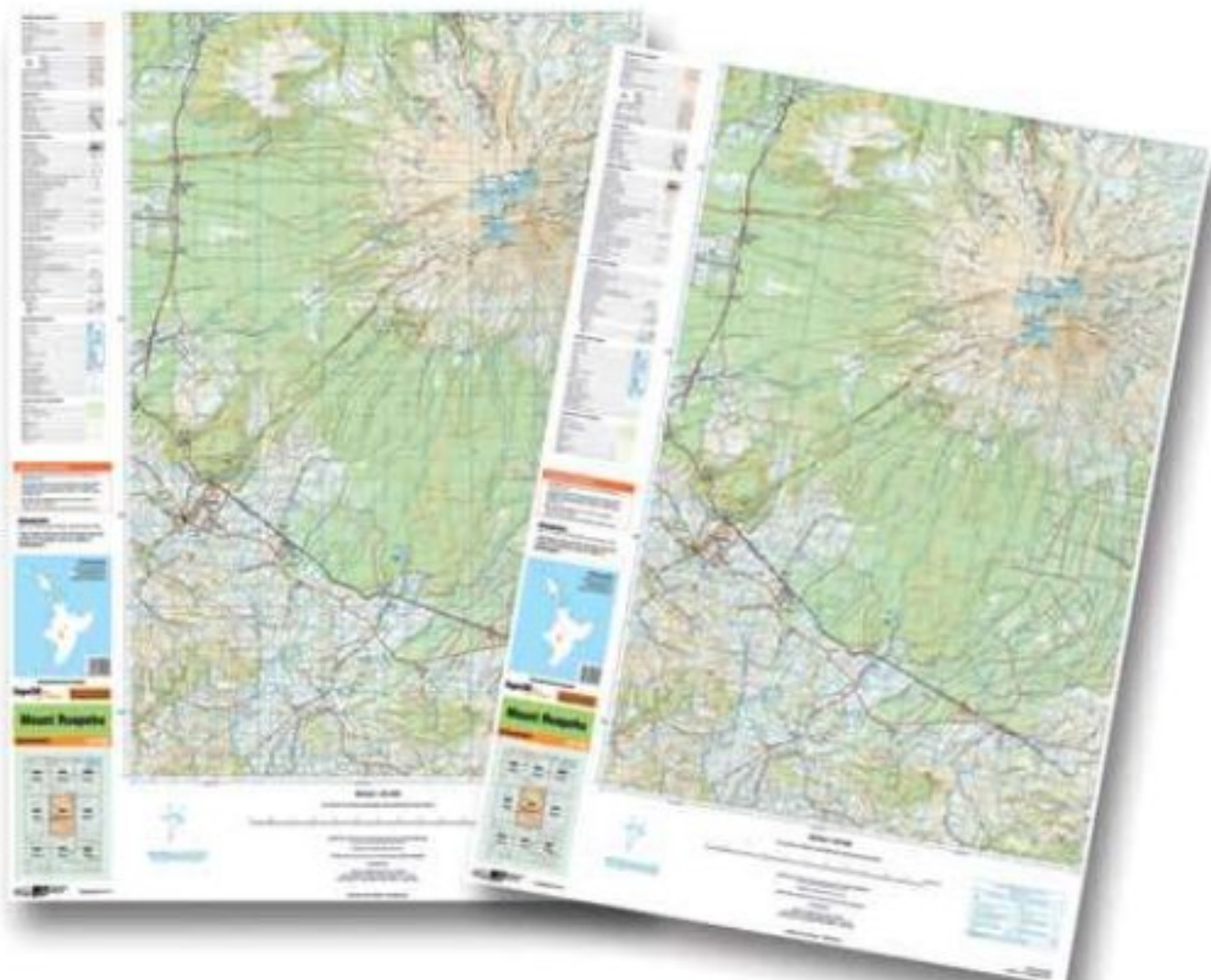
Once there, you'll have reached a true hidden wonder. "It's eroded over thousands of years but the roof's still intact," says Reid. "It's not as big as Oparara but you can clearly see how the water's eroded through the rock and you can see the timelines in it. The spot's isolated and not many people find it."

Time 2hr **Grade** Easy



The dramatic Hole in the Hill caused by thousands of years of erosion

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Starfish feed on mussels clinging to the reef

REEF STARS

Thirteen Mile, Greymouth | RANGER: John Reid

Low tide may not be the best time to see waves shooting up blowholes in Pancake Rocks at Punakaiki, but it's the best time to spot this hidden gem off Coast Road, between Punakaiki and Greymouth.

Just 10-20min walk south along the coastline from the small collection of baches at Thirteen Mile Creek (between Twelve Mile Bluff and Fourteen Mile Bluff), takes you to a rock shelf where thousands of mussels feed off the rock. Feeding on them

are scores of starfish, creating a colourful spectacle.

"Most locals know about it," says Reid, "but not many visitors. It's unique to this part of the West Coast."

Time 20-30min **Grade** Easy

MUDSTONE CANYON

Ford Creek Chasm, Blackball | RANGER: John Reid



The mudstone formations of Ford Creek Chasm

How many towns could boast an accessible gorge which you can walk to from the town centre? Ford Creek Chasm is right next to Blackball and you can access it opposite the disused quarry on Roa Road.

A steep, unmarked track leads to the gorge, then you can enjoy a fun trip down the canyon. No ropes are needed just a wetsuit and some good footwear. There are some pools on the way and the canyon should definitely not be tried after heavy rain, but in good weather it's a straightforward descent.

"Most other canyons in the region have schist rock," says Reid. "But this is in mudstone and the formations and colours that have been created look remarkable. It's not difficult but the water's pretty cold."

Time 2hr **Grade** Moderate

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**WILD
KAYAKING**

Abi on the way to
Chew Tobacco Bay

BENEATH



After kayaking around the South Island, **Tara Mulvany** did the logical thing: she hopped in her boat and spent five weeks paddling Stewart Island

GLOWING *series*

Deep In The Roaring Forties, Stewart Island/Rakiura is a lonely island. In 1770 Captain James Cook mistakenly thought the island was connected to the South Island. So he named it South Cape – probably the biggest error on the first map ever charted of New Zealand.

For a long time, a circumnavigation of Rakiura had been at the back of my mind. When my friend Sim and I set off in late autumn 2012 to paddle around the South Island, we intended to include Rakiura as well. But we underestimated the enormity of the task and it wasn't long before we decided to focus solely on the Mainland. It was a good thing really, as it left the trip for a time when I could explore and appreciate the place.

So on a grey and drizzly November morning, I loaded my kayak onto the ferry and bounced and rolled south to Oban to begin the second leg of my mission to circumnavigate all three of New Zealand's main islands. My friends, Abi and Eve – both Fiordland kayak guides – would be along for the first week of the adventure.

In Oban, we packed our kayaks on the water's edge, under the curious eyes of a mob of locals who had gathered to watch the annual 'Stewart Island Man' competition. A couple of fishermen wandered past. "Where're ya going?" they asked. After explaining our plan, they smiled sceptically and half-heartedly wished us luck before carrying on their way. I hoped that I'd bump into them on a rough day on the ocean further south.

Our kayaks loaded, we paddled into Paterson Inlet with gusts of wind heav-

ing sheets of spray into our faces, forcing us to fight for every kilometre. We slept that night in an open shelter at an old Norwegian whaling base at Prices Inlet. The next morning we paddled towards Freshwater River, a long, meandering river, which winds its way inland in twists and turns. Tall reeds covered its banks, and scraggly manuka bushes hung over the dark, tannin-stained water. We hauled our kayaks up a steep bank into the forest and walked barefoot for a couple of hours to Mason Bay on the western side of the island. The beach was flat and wide, and huge wind-blown clouds streaked the dark sky. Surf exploded in huge sets, and giant pieces of driftwood lay well clear of the high tide mark. It was an extreme place, as remote as it was beautiful.

After a couple of days exploring Paterson Inlet, we made our break for the open coast. Piercing the thick, early morning mist, we paddled south with a small rolling on the calm sea. We followed close to the coast, just clear of the waves that were breaking on the rocky shore. Seaweed swirled with the current, and a lone mollymawk carved a sweeping arc in front of us. By late morning we cruised into Chew Tobacco Bay, the furthest south Abi and Eve would be going. That night, we cooked a feed of crumbed blue cod fillets with fresh lemon, veggies and rice, washed down with Eve's treasured bottle of Coke. Then we lit a huge bonfire on the beach.

The next morning, I watched the girls slowly disappear as they kayaked back to Oban. An hour later I slid my boat into the



HE SLAMMED INTO MY RUDDER and flew out of the water, barking **AND SHOWING ME HIS BIG WHITE TEETH**

Broad Bay, the furthest south the author has ever been



Abi and Eve on the tannin stained waters of Freshwater River; Inset: Tara Mulvany



On the summit of Bald Cone



water and paddled south under a darkening sky to Port Adventure. In front of me lay some of the most pristine, white sand beaches I had ever seen. Soaked and hungry, I pulled up at Port Adventure Hunters Hut, lit the pot belly stove and cooked a feed. For three days the winds raged, bringing squalls of rain which pounded the tin roof.

When the weather calmed, I made a break for the coast, a group of seals following me. I was nervous: sharks like seals and I was in great white territory.

Just out of Port Adventure, I caught a big trumpeter and fastened it to my deck. I paddled slowly in the rain, winding in and out of small bays and under overhangs and caves in the rock. Penguins squawked and the rain slowly dribbled through the holes in my jacket. Aiming for Lords River, which lay just around the corner, I paddled through a narrow gap between Rakiura and Owen Island. Waves surged over shallow rocks and I timed my run; there was no turning back.

On the other side of the gap, the wind was gusting and the steep sea breaking heavily on the rocks. I paddled hard into the wind, taking the point wide and gradually moving into the river mouth. It was only 600m of paddling, but it was a scary ferry to safety. By the time I reached sheltered waters, I was well and truly soaked, but my trumpeter was still secured to the deck.

Strong southerly winds battered the coast for a few days and I was thankful I had shelter in a small hunter's hut. I spent my days collecting and cutting firewood, drinking tea and generally enjoying being separated from the outside world. One stormy day, I paddled inland on the calm river, soaking in the magic under a dripping world. A lone seal followed me, but mostly the river seemed eerily deserted.

The next day, on a three metre south-west swell, I paddled to Port Pegasus. It was an exposed 35km stretch of coast, and the big sea forced me away from the rugged shore.

I paddled nonstop for hours, slowly ticking off the small headlands on my map. The sky cleared just as I made my way into the sheltered waters of Port Pegasus, revealing a wild landscape where giant granite boulders lay scattered on hilltops and the intriguing peaks of Gog and Magog rose through afternoon haze. I was alone in this perfect wilderness.

With the beachside South Pegasus Hunters Hut as my base, I spent my days cruising and fishing. At night, under candlelight, I feasted on my catch of the day and would cure any leftovers with my homemade smoker, the aroma of manuka filling the air.

One sunny day, I spent hours bashing through the thickest scrub I've ever encountered. It got so bad I resorted to crawling beneath stunted manuka, dragging my pack behind me. I was scraped, bleeding, and wishing I had more than crocs and shorts on.

All my frustrations were wiped away the second I reached the saddle below the granite tower of Magog. The Titi/Muttonbird Islands spanned across the glassy ocean to the west, and in the barren landscape all around me lay thousands of granite boulders.

I climbed to the summit, the sun on my face and the rock warm under my feet. This was everything I could have hoped for; I was finally here, looking down on the islands that I had dreamed about for so long. When the sun disappeared and the light began to fade, I curled up in my sleeping bag under a huge rock.

As I paddled one drizzly grey day, a large and angry sea lion chased me for about 3km, constantly slamming into my rudder. He flew out of the water, barking and showing me his big white teeth. I wasn't relaxed.

A few days later, with the forecast looking good for a run around South West Cape, I paddled out of Pegasus, bound for Broad Bay, just around the corner. I had underestimated the seriousness of this short stretch along the coast, and soon I was flying forwards at a speed of around 7km/hr on the strong current despite the 15-knot headwind and the

On the edge of Lords River



two metre swell. The swell was short and steep, and the troughs close together. Paddling quickly, I kept turning to check the waves behind me.

That night, I camped on a lonely beach under a full moon, the furthest south I'd ever been. The only thing that prevented this setting from being perfect was a huge sea lion sleeping on a rocky island nearby. I'd snuck past, paddling slowly and quietly and pulled up onto the beach unnoticed. What disturbed me the most were the marks in the sand from what looked like a couple of very large sea lions. But I had nowhere else to go, so set up camp in the grasses above the beach and tried to stay silent.

I woke early and paddled away in the dim light, heading towards a place that had lingered in my mind for a long time. My imagination could not do South West Cape justice. Waves broke on the coast, throwing sheets of sea spray high into the air. I kept my distance, slowly working south until I was about a kilometre offshore. Here, the waves and the swell were a little more consistent in their movements. The sky was clear, but a thin band of cloud hung persistently.

The outgoing tide swept me towards South West Cape. The forecast was as good as I could have hoped for with only a two metre south-west swell, and variable 10-knot wind. A rare day at 47-degrees south. But still, it was a powerful place with an immense amount of current whipping past the cape, and lines of huge standing and breaking waves. I paused for a moment, turned my bow south, and paddled as fast as I could towards Antarctica.

It wasn't until I was about 3km out to sea that I started to relax. The swell was still huge, and I was still being swept along, but the waves were not so steep and nothing was breaking. Sunlight danced on the confused water. Overhead, a pair of sooty shearwaters glided past, their curiosity bringing them closer before they continued on their way into the sunrise.

Well clear of the cape, I turned north and made my way to the coast, gaining welcome shelter from Big South Cape Island. Waves rolled gently, but my progress was slowed with the turning tide. I'd taken an educated guess at the tide times and as it turned out, I'd hit the cape half an hour before low but it had treated me kindly.

The sky was clear and cloudless, there was no wind. Apart from the birds, I was still alone. I had only seen one boat since leaving Port Adventure weeks before. The Muttonbird Islands spanned the ocean to the west, steep sided and covered in thick scrub. I wanted to land on them but they belong to Maori and are strictly off limits. The islands are full of life during the muttonbird harvest in autumn each year, when the fluffy young sooty shearwaters are plucked from their burrows. On this beautiful day, they looked deserted.

With strong westerly winds forecast for the next couple of days, I decided to keep going, and after nearly 12 hours of paddling, landed on the wide sandy beach at Doughboy Bay. Although the bay is accessible overland by foot, there was not a soul in sight. Only sea lions lazing on the beach in the late afternoon sun. I stripped off, ran and jumped into the warm ocean. Swimming along, I constantly scanned the water for any sign of giant, furry creatures. From what I'd seen of their mating sessions, I was convinced I didn't want to be a part of it.

I stayed at Doughboy Bay for three days. It was perfect. I cranked up the pot belly stove in the hut and baked chocolate cake in my cast iron pot.


From Doughboy Bay I paddled 55km, passing the long sandy beach at Masons Bay, keeping well offshore and away from the surf, to the top of the island where I camped on a huge sandy beach facing Foveaux Strait. I spent a few days relaxing, fishing and lying in the sun at the quaint Yankee River Hut. I also encountered some trampers walking the North West Circuit.

From Christmas Village Hut, I climbed Mt Anglem barefoot and survived a raging hurricane on the summit. Well at least I think it was the summit. All I could think about was how much my toes stung in the cold.

When the weather cleared a few days later, I paddled into Oban for the night, completing the loop. I had a feed, stocked up on some veggies and fruit, and the next morning kayaked back to Bungaree Hut.

For four days I waited for the winds to drop enough to allow me to cross Foveaux Strait, aiming for the faint outline of Bluff. It was a glassy crossing, and the swell was tame. Six hours later, after being swept way left, and then back right with the tide, I made my way into Bluff Harbour.

Rakiura made me feel alive. It brought me closer to nature than I have felt in a long time. I walked on beaches with pure white sand so fine that it squeaked under my feet. I saw the first of the flowers emerge from the flax; a splash of colour marking the arrival of summer. I watched a group of tui gorging themselves on the nectar, and I heard the shrieking call of kiwi on countless nights. I paddled past thousands of squawking little blue and Fiordland crested penguins. I had survived five weeks in sea lion territory.

Rakiura, the land of the glowing skies. What a magical place. 

- Less than two weeks later, Mulvany began kayaking around the North Island, becoming the first woman to have paddled around all three islands of New Zealand. Her book *A Winter's Paddle*, which charts her journey around the South Island, was published in September.

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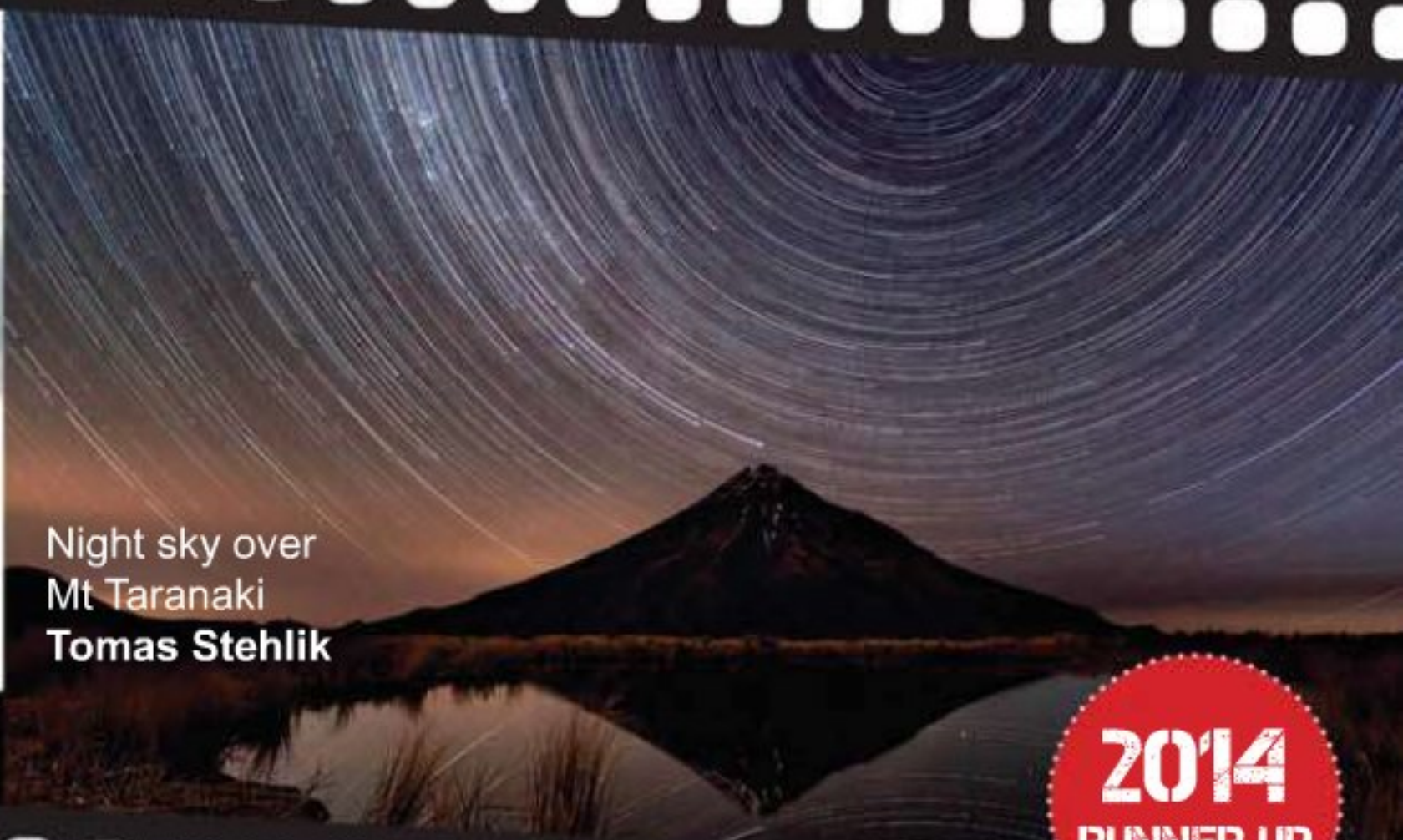
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- 2 Gibbs Hill, Abel Tasman National Park
- 3 Manuka and Woolshed Huts, Hakatere Conservation Area
- 4 Post Office Point, Manapouri
- 5 Whangamumu Te Toroa Track loop, Cape Brett
- 6 Aicken Range, Arthur's Pass National Park



LAKESIDE SERENITY

Kawakawa Bay Track, Taupo / **EASY**



This is a great way to experience Lake Taupo while avoiding the hustle of the town. Kinloch is a small village just 20km or so west of Taupo and, from here, there are two popular mountain bike tracks – the W2K (Whakaipo Bay to Kinloch) and the K2K (Kawakawa Bay to Kinloch).

My partner Lauren and I chose to walk the K2K, heading west over the peninsula to Kawakawa Bay, where there's no road access. In fact, from here there's no paved road access to the lake until you reach Te Hape Bay in the south-western corner of Lake Taupo, and virtually all the coastline is bush, giving this side of the lake a much wilder feel.

The tracks may be designed for bikers but they also make excellent not-too-strenuous walking tracks.

We set off along a path that runs adjacent to the shoreline and it didn't take long for the white mountains of Tongariro National Park to

appear from behind the Whangamata Bluffs. Soon the path veered away from the shore to go through bush and there were few clues, other than the occasional engine noise from



The camping platform near Kawakawa Bay

a boat, that the lake was nearby.

The track gradually rose and fell several times and crossed numerous streams before

reaching the climb over the peninsula.

Being designed for mountain bikes, the gradient was always agreeable, but it was so full of bends that I lost my bearings. This was at no stage disconcerting because the track's so easy to follow, but I was convinced the map was outdated and the track was taking me around the headland to the south of Te Kauwae.

There is the occasional view of the impressive Te Tuhi Point on the Whangamata Bluffs, which drops steeply into the water. But it was not until we reached a lookout over Kawakawa Bay that I realised we'd been following the same route as on the map all along.

The view from the lookout was amazing, taking in the forest-clad coastline and the water a tremendous blue in the early afternoon sun. Te Kauwae blocks the Central Plateau mountains, but this hardly seems to matter.



The lookout over
Kawakawa Bay

Download the route of this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz

The large rock at the lookout provided the perfect platform to stop for lunch. This was interrupted several times by bikers and runners also keen to admire the view.

The thought of an ice cream at Kinloch was enough to entice Lauren back to the start. But I decided to complete the track all the way to Whangamata Road. The path quickly descended to Kawakawa Bay via some dank, dark gullies which you can hardly imagine the sun's rays ever touching.

Kawakawa Bay was glorious. A narrow, shingle strip with bush to one side and calm, glistening water on the other, below the rocks on the steep slopes of Te Kauwae.

There are toilets here and a raised camping shelter with log fire. The track continues close to the water for only 100m or so before heading deeper into the bush and beginning to climb.

An innocuous bridge took me over

a deep ravine – dropping a long way between a gap in the rock so narrow it was little more than a crack. It would be easily missed. Soon, two benches provide a rest, if needed, and one of the last panoramas over the lake, this time with the mountains of Tongariro in full view.

The track follows a stream up a little valley, leaving the native bush for mixed forest and paddocks. At one stage, I crossed a farm track through a tunnel beneath a bridge made from earth and used tyres.

The bird life changed too – gone were the numerous tui and fantails and now I could hear magpies, chaffinches and paradise ducks.

When I reached a longdrop toilet I heard cars once more and saw my very obliging girlfriend waiting for me in the car park.

- Matthew Pike

WILD FILE

Access From Taupo head west along Poihipi Rd and follow signs to Kinloch. Park either in Mata Place or Nisbet Terrace. Car transfer required if walking the entire track

Grade Easy

Time 4-6hr

Map BG35, BG36

ROUTE CODE
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I recall thinking that I was going down too fast.

Next thing I remember I am lying on my back with my climbing partners beside me in a crevasse saying that I had had a fall of about 10 metres.

I stood up and felt OK but decided that I wasn't up for walking another 1-2 hrs to French Ridge Hut. They tried to flatten off a sleeping area- they put on my long johns and the extra puffer jacket I had and made a mattress of the rope coil and empty pack and then activated the Fastfind personal locator beacon about 9pm.

About 1 am we heard a wonderful noise... thud thud thud.. and there was the helicopter. Andrew raced out to the end of the glacier and used his torch as well as the already flashing light on my beacon. It shone its searchlight on us for about 20 seconds and then vanished from view to land and collect me".



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SUMMIT TO SEA

Gibbs Hill, Abel Tasman National Park / MODERATE

With much time spent hiking the ranges of the South Island and elsewhere, often through wild and sometimes dangerous terrain, it's a pleasure to find an easy walk with a degree of effort; one which can be walked in a morning without a pack.

Such is Gibbs Hill in northern Abel Tasman National Park. Gibbs, 405m, is a modest summit with a 4km approach along the ridgeline which climbs from Totaranui Beach.

This is what I most enjoyed about this hike: though relatively easy, there is still some effort involved as you have to climb every one of those 405m from the sea level camp at Totaranui, and what better time to go than dawn, before the camp has awakened.

It was cool and fine with a little cloud cover hugging the hilltop forest where I was headed, which I hoped would disperse by the time I arrived.

The first section of the track was flat, then it eased slowly into Kaikau Stream, crossing it and heading for the top. Steep and sometimes slippery, the route up was relentless until 200m where the spur flattened off and I could see the main ridge ahead. I was glad to get that section over and done with so I could ease back and enjoy the remainder of the walk, undulating above forest and stream.

A signpost indicated the Gibbs Track junction with the Pigeon Saddle Track, this heads south and onto the Inland Track, deep inside the park. From here it's just 1km and 100m of ascent to go.

The cloud hadn't moved much, my early

start had me up there too quickly. A short sharp ascent through some overgrowth of scrub and gorse (DOC hasn't done much track clearing) brought me to the top. Unfortunately, the view was obscured by both the scrub and cloud cover so I was unable to see into Golden Bay and out to Farewell Spit, though there was a nice view towards Totaranui.

I didn't stay long and soon started the return leg. On the way up I spotted some better locations on the ridgeline where I could take a few photos and sure enough they delivered a better view than the frustrating summit. I wasn't too bothered though: I was out for the exercise and the bush scenes, which were quite beautiful and I collected a few on the way back down.

The forest scenes increased as I descended, with some particularly striking ones near the



Wainui Inlet
from Gibbs Hill

Download the route of this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz

base of the ascent onto a face in the Kaikau Stream catchment where punga dominated.

Soon I was out onto the grassy flats and road where I picked up my bike to cycle the last 1.4km back to Totaranui.

- Pat Barrett

WILD FILE

Access From Totaranui Beach, off the Anapai Bay Track

Grade Moderate

Time 2hr to summit

Distance 3.68km

Map BN25

ROUTE CODE
WLDNRSS0329



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PAT BARRETT IMAGES

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THE ART OF ROUTE FINDING

Manuka and Woolshed Creek Huts, Hakatere Conservation Area / MODERATE

When an unseasonal deluge on the Main Divide left our plans to cross the Wilberforce River to complete the Unknown Stream/Moa Saddle circuit in tatters, a quick re-think was required and it was to the reliable Hakatere Conservation Area we travelled.

Our late start was compensated for by a quick and easy stroll from the access point next to Castleridge Station along the 4WD track past Lake Emily, across the side of Emily Hill and down into the Stour River West Branch valley. A low-running Stour River made an easy crossing to Manuka Hut where we intended to settle for the night before taking the Stour River East Branch around the Manuka Range and up over to the ever popular Woolshed Creek Hut on the Mount Somers Track. An old musterer's hut, Manuka Hut is a real gem with six mattress bunks and a fine fireplace. Easy access to water and proximity to the road makes Manuka Hut a popular destination for day walkers and horse trekkers, and also provides shelter along Te Araroa.

Once we'd fought our way through matagouri to chop up some dead wood from across the river we had a roaring fire and combined with a spectacular clear night sky we had an enjoyable evening.

With time on our side, we had a casual start the next morning before heading off around the Manuka Range – first following the West Branch; meeting the watershed and then following the course of the East Branch of the Stour River. Initially, matagouri and swampy conditions made progress slow but once on the low tussock flats we made good time. Waist-high grasses and swampy conditions ahead combined with intermittent matagouri-filled gullies then persuaded us to leave the relative plains to try our luck on the true right side of the river – but this proved even more challenging with slow painful progress up and down the steep sides of the Manuka Range in a vain attempt to avoid the worst of the matagouri and spaniard.

Frustrated, and seeing better conditions



Descending Emily Hill into the Stour River West Branch

Download the route of this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz

appear on the other side of the river, we once again crossed it – climbing the ever-present steep escarpments up to the true left of the river. Quick progress followed before another matagouri-filled gully and an intimidating drop of one of the East Branch's tributaries convinced us to go down to the river, break for lunch and then follow the more amenable looking slope of the East Branch out to its convergence with the West Branch.

Thus, after lunch it was a pleasant bolder hop down the river to where it flattened out and the rivers joined. Despite being pretty tired, a map check convinced us that Woolshed Creek Hut was within easy distance despite an imposing climb up the ridgeline to the 4WD track that leads to the hut. Following a fence line, the biggest challenges proved to be the omnipresent matagouri and frequent swampy conditions before an easier-than-anticipated climb up and over to the hut.

The 26-bunk hut was predictably busy so it was decided an early start was in order to avoid the breakfast log-jam and the worst of the summer heat.

At 6am we walked back to the Stour River.

From there it was a simple case of following the 4WD track over the flats, past Lake Emily back to the car and a deserved cool jug in Methven.

Although not the most exciting of routes, the tramp does offer a good alternative when time is short, rivers are high and you want to try route finding in a non-technical environment.

Plus the beauty of Hakatere is always worth a visit.

- Conor Leahy

WILD FILE

Access Ashburton Gorge Road from Mt Somers, then Hakatere-Heron Road. Park at the track to Lake Emily next to Castleridge Station

Grade Moderate

Time Car park to Manuka Hut, 2hr; Manuka Hut to Woolshed Creek Hut, 7.5hr; Woolshed Creek to car park, 5hr

Distance 32.3km

Map BX19



To get this route on your phone, go to www.viewranger.com/new-zealand

ROUTE CODE
WLDNRSS0330





FOREVER FOREST

Post Office Point to Control Gates,
Manapouri / **EASY**

The route to Post Office Rock in Manapouri is so little known that chances are even if you ask a local about it you're likely to be met with a blank stare.

Minimal signposting can make it tricky to even get started, but once on your way the unofficial route opens up an opportunity to walk from Manapouri to Te Anau.

Formed mostly by volunteers, the track starts out a little rough and muddy, but gradually becomes easy going through open beech forest. A careful eye needs to be kept on the tattered pink ribbon and old butcher's apron strips, which mark the way, as the track is faint in places and it's easy to be led astray.

I set off with my mum on a hot, late spring afternoon, from the northern end of Frazers Beach. After initially finding ourselves in a farmer's paddock, we back-tracked, found where we had missed the track, and then it was an enjoyable hour's walk to Post Office Rock.

The track initially forces its way through thick manuka scrub, which closes in densely on either side. Once in the beech forest there is a feeling of not being on a track at all, as it obviously doesn't get a lot of traffic and we met no-one.

The beech trees along this edge of Lake Manapouri are draped with thick swathes of old man's beard, and the forest gives a feeling of having been there forever.

At Post Office Point it was time for a cool-down in the lake before carrying on another half an hour to Supply Bay Road. Our plan was to walk back the way we had come and then finish the walk to Rainbow Reach the next day.

The second half of the route from Supply Bay Road follows the Waiau River through beech forest before tracking into open manuka scrubland.

At Balloon Loop Road, follow your nose along the river, 4WD tracks and open grassy areas. The route is not marked but is easy to follow.

From Rainbow Reach you can cross the river and take the Kepler Track to the Control Gates and on to Te Anau. The route is easy, flat walking, which can be as long or as short as suits, although care needs to be taken to make sure you stay on the route.

— Edith Leigh



Top: Enjoying the view across Lake Manapouri from Post Office Point; Above: Open beech forest makes for pleasant walking

WILD FILE

Access Start from the northern end of Frazers Beach, or from the lake viewpoint in Manapouri, take the top track through the bush above Frazers Beach Rd

Grade Easy

Time 3-3.5hr to Rainbow Reach

Distance 18.2km to Manapouri

Map CD08, CD07



To get this route on your phone, go to www.viewranger.com/new-zealand

ROUTE CODE
WLDNRSS0331



Exposed
and rugged
Te Toroa
Bay

CAPE BRETT ALTERNATIVE

Whangamumu Te Toroa
Track loop, Cape Brett

MODERATE

Download the route of this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz

Cape Brett may be the jewel in the crown of Bay of Islands' walks, but there are equally rewarding day trips in the vicinity. A willing neighbour and I opted for the Whangamumu Harbour/Te Toroa Bay loop near Rawhiti – our interest sparked after reading about the history of an old whaling station in the area.

The DOC sign at the access point indicated just over two hours' return to the whaling station and six hours for the loop, taking in Te Toroa Bay and the Kauri Grove Track – which we would stretch to an unhurried eight hours.

Crossing a stile onto farmland, we walked along an expansive grass and then gravel path, amidst secondary growth of tree ferns and manuka.

The path then narrowed, turning to clay on a steady climb to the brow of a ridge.

Here the track branched left to Kauri Grove (the completion of the loop) and the Cape Brett Track. Within minutes we were greeted by stunning views of Home Point and Whangaruru to the south, and Whangamumu Harbour directly below us. It wasn't difficult to see why boaties shelter here from an easterly – the inner harbour has a narrow entrance with two outer arms adding a breakwater effect.

We descended the grassy slopes to the pohutukawa-fringed beach, deciding to it was as good a place as any to stop for lunch.

Heading north along the beach, we quickly

rounded the headland leading to the ruins of the whaling station, only just avoiding the approaching high tide. The station operated from the late 19th Century until 1940, when an oil slick from a wreck forced the whales to alter their migratory route, putting the station out of business. One could only imagine the horrors of this place: blubber stripped and bones ground to dust, with the leftovers discarded in the harbour, creating a feeding frenzy of seagulls and fish.

Just a few ruins remain – the slipway, concrete vats, rusting boilers and pipes – all being swallowed by arum lilies and the ever-present kikuyu. At the water's edge is a memorial illustrating the station's history.

Trying not to dwell on the past, we hiked uphill through increasingly dense bush and then made the steep descent to the first of two inlets in Te Toroa Bay. It's an unforgiving, exposed and rocky coast, eventually leading to Cape Brett. Reaching the second inlet, we were wary of rogue waves entering on the incoming tide – such a contrast to the calm waters of Whangamumu.

Having not encountered any other walkers, we felt sufficiently removed from civilisation to induce a momentary sense of calm. That was until we spotted two jet trails and an oil tanker well offshore – a reminder that human footprints are never far away.

From the second inlet it's a strenuous 40-minute climb to the junction with the Cape Brett Track. Turning south, we moved

along the undulating spine of the peninsula towards a high point of 345m at the Pukehuia trig, with magnificent views on both sides – particularly the outer Bay of Islands to the north-west.

We reached another junction and began the gentle descent of the Kauri Grove Track – a mix of regenerating bush and young kauri – eventually completing the loop. In the soft light of the late afternoon sun we reflected more on an immensely satisfying day and less on the impending soreness.

- Michael Smith

WILD FILE

Access Drive 27km on Russell/Kemphorne/Manawaora roads and turn left onto Rawhiti Road. Track begins 1km from junction.

Grade Moderate

Time 5-6hr

Distance 12.4km

Map AV30

Further information The walk involves entering a section of the Cape Brett Track and attracts a fee of \$10, payable at the Russell Information Centre.



To get this route on your phone, go to www.viewranger.com/new-zealand

ROUTE CODE
WLDRNSS0332



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SEATO SUMMIT



Paul Hersey meets the locals during
Backyard & Beyond's two months in Nepal,
NZ 2014 Anidesha Chuli Expedition
Photo: John Price Photography

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YEARS

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AICKEN RANGE

ARTHUR'S PASS NATIONAL PARK

ying in the heart of Arthur's Pass National Park, the Aicken Range runs due north from its intersection with the Main Divide near Goat Pass to fan out into two large sub ridges protruding eastwards into the Otehake catchment. One of these is dominated by the popular Mt Pfeifer, while the other runs east from Mt Russel and has no named summits but several moderately high peaks.

Wholly contained within Westland, the range is rough country with not a single marked track to boast of yet a huge array of opportunities for those seeking wilderness and adventure. Much of the activity centres around the northern end of the range at Pfeifer Bivvy, where there are some unmarked routes onto the tops. Other than this, the tops require careful planning to reach and traverse.

- Pat Barrett

1 Mt Pfeifer

At the north eastern end of the range Mt Pfeifer, 1704m, is unmatched for its view over both the Otehake and Taramakau catchments. It is readily climbed from Pfeifer Bivvy and can be included in a traverse of this end of the range to reach the eastern end of Lake Kaurapataka.

2 Pfeifer Bivouac

There has been a bivvy on this site for decades, but the latest now occupying the large northward-facing basin has none of the charm of the previous biv. Still, it is welcome just the same as a retreat for those seeking a remote location that can only be reached with some effort and in good conditions.

3 Lake Kaurapataka

Bush-enclosed Lake Kaurapataka hides in the folded landscape below Pfeifer Bivvy and is a popular weekend tramp. There is a track along the southern shore via Pfeifer Creek and the lower Otehake River flats. There are some limited campsites at the lake shore.

4 Mt Tarapuhi

South of Mt Pfeifer is Mt Tarapuhi, 1605m, a rugged little summit requiring some daring to reach as it is beset on both sides by crumbling razorback ridges. There are some wonderful alpine basins along this route, particularly on the south-west side of Mt Pfeifer.

5 Deception River

A large catchment flanking the eastern side of the range, Deception River is a well-used trapper's route to Goat Pass on the Main Divide and as such offers

some alternative ways onto the range, especially up Good Luck Creek (bad waterfall) and the Upper Deception.

6 Otehake River

The Otehake is a designated Wilderness Area, but still has an old track running through it and a hut – Otehake Hut. The travel here is rough and slow and requires good judgement.

7 Upper Deception Hut

Set near the limit of the bush in the Deception River, Upper Deception Hut has a remote feel to it and stands just above this flood-prone river. It is a good stopover point if you are heading over Goat Pass.

8 Mt Franklin

The highest peak on the range, Mt Franklin, 2145m, is a moderately difficult climb and has a reputation as a climber's mountain. It is a remote peak for Arthur's Pass National Park and is usually accessed via Good Luck Creek or the ridgeline from Upper Deception.

9 Lake Sally and Anna

These two large alpine lakes are set in high cirques to the south of Mt Franklin. They are both at around 1700m and command spectacular views.




10 Taramakau River

Immediately north of the Aicken Range runs the Taramakau River, a major Westland river system carrying a large volume of water. Apart from the Deception, it is the most regularly used access to the range and the Otehake.

11 One Shot Hill and Waharoa Saddle

Waharoa Saddle is reached on the

lightly marked route to Pfeifer Biv. By crossing the Morrison Footbridge at the confluence of the Otira and Deception rivers and heading up Paratu Stream to the saddle, the ridge south of here can be followed around to the high basins.

One Shot Hill is readily climbed from the saddle on a scrubby route. 

AICKEN
RANGE

route to Goat Pass

7 Upper Deception Hut

9

Lake Anna

Good Luck Cr.

Mt Franklin 2145

8

Mt Russel 1868

5

Mt Tarapuhi 1605

4

9

Lake Sally

A I C K E N R A N G E

Orehake R. West Branch >>

Orehake Hut

Whoriti Stream >>

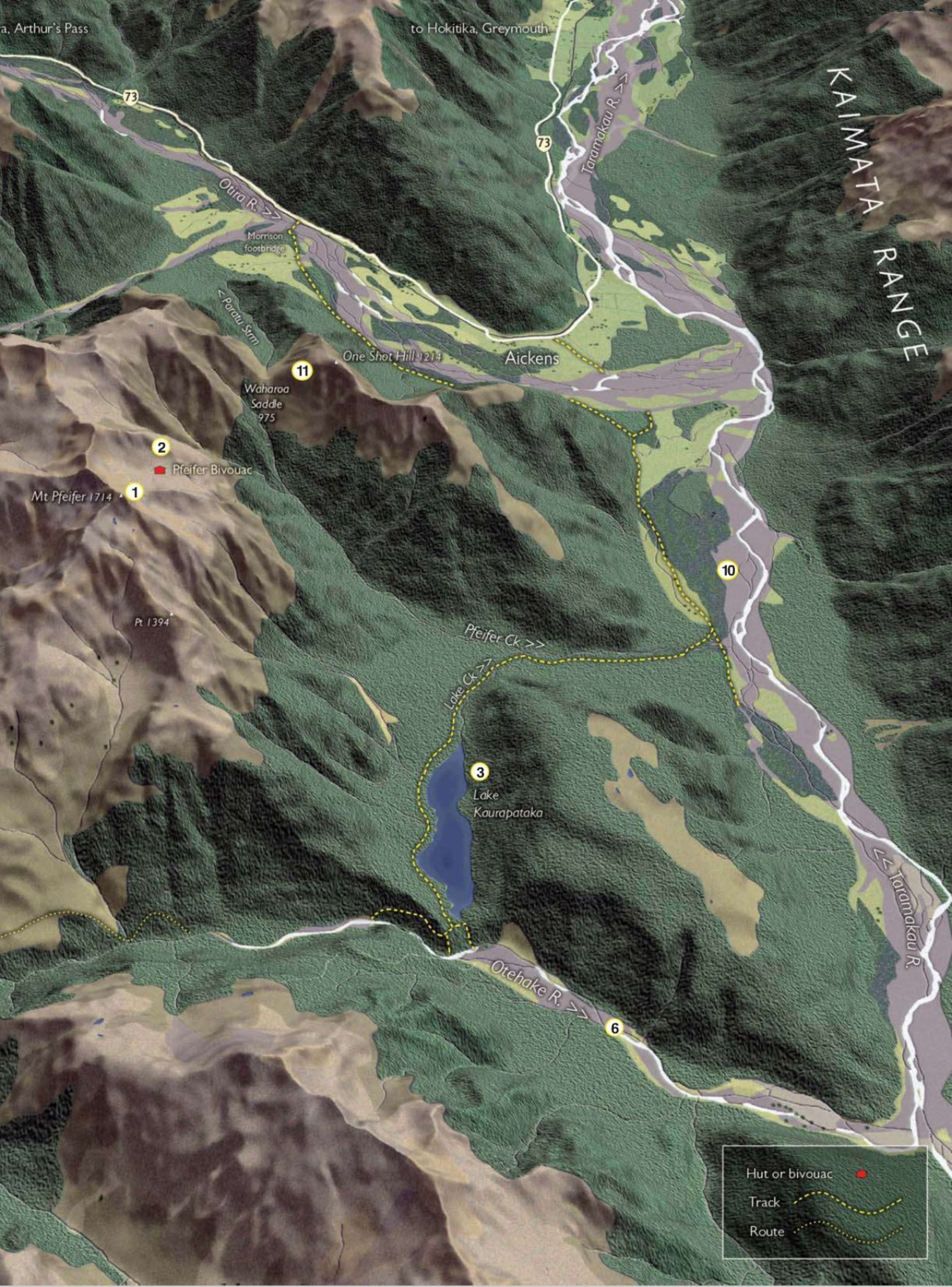
<< Koropuku Ck

NORTH

Arthur's Pass

to Hokitika, Greymouth

KAIMATA RANGE



73

73

Otira R. >>

Morrison footbridge

< Paratu Stream

One Shot Hill 1214

Aickens

11

Waharoa Saddle 975

2

Pfeifer Bivouac

Mt Pfeifer 1714

1

Pt 1394

Pfeifer Ck >>

Lake Ck >>

3

Lake Kaurapataka

10

Otehake R. >>


6

Taramakau R.

Hut or bivouac

Track

Route

A photograph of a wooden pier extending into a calm lake at dawn. The pier is made of weathered wooden planks and posts, leading from the bottom right towards the center of the frame. The water is still, reflecting the light from the sky. In the background, a large, dark mountain with patches of snow rises against a pale, blue sky. The overall mood is serene and quiet.

Timing is everything. A
keen photographer is
up at dawn to catch the
first rays of sun kissing
Mt Robert, Nelson
Lakes National Park

7 TIPS FOR BETTER OUTDOOR PHOTOS

Want to win the 2015
Wilderness photo
competition?
Photographer **Ray
Salisbury** shares his
advice for taking
winning outdoor shots





Enveloped in mist and poor lighting, this drab scene was resurrected by the rule of thirds and by converting to a black and white image

① TIMING

Contrary to popular practice, shooting under the midday summer sun is unlikely to produce inspiring results; the overhead sun creates short shadows, which are harsh. The resulting photos lack three-dimensional form and appear flat and lacklustre.

For quality light, try shooting in the 'golden hour' – that magical time of day before sunset (or after dawn) when the light is soft and diffused, bathing the hills in a golden glow. Also try shooting in the 'blue hour'; half an hour after sundown the sky's colours can become brilliantly intense.

Or how about braving the elements and shooting immediately after a storm, waiting for the moment when a shaft of light penetrates the moody sky? Amongst professionals, there is a mantra that goes: 'Hurry up and wait ... then wait some more.'

② LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Most people take photos from where they happen to be standing, from eye level. Merely moving a few metres away, or lying down on the ground can instantly improve your camera angle. It is especially important when photographing children or wildlife to get down to their level. For variety, shoot in portrait orientation (vertical) not just in landscape (horizontal).

You will find better light and more simple compositions above the treeline, especially when the rocks are coated in virgin snow. And there are better views from high up in the mountains.

③ KEEP COMPOSED

Rules are made to be broken, but they're an important starting point.

The most common mistake is to place your subject in the centre of the frame. Try applying the Rule of Thirds, instead: divide your camera's LCD screen into a 3x3 grid, then place key elements of your scene on the intersecting lines. For instance, if the sky is uninteresting, put the horizon one third of the way down the photo, and feature the landscape. Conversely, if you are looking at a stunning cloudscape, make this fill two thirds of the photograph.

The exception to the Rule of Thirds is when shooting a symmetrical scene such as a mirror-calm lake with reflections.

A lesser-known rule is the Rule of Odds. If you have two competing subjects in your shot, they can cancel each other out. The viewer won't know which to look at. So, having an odd number of subjects will help achieve a better balance and be more aesthetically pleasing.

Finally, try to include some foreground interest to give the viewer's eye something to lock onto. Leading lines such as fences, tracks or rivers can help the viewer's eye to navigate through your composition.



The interior lighting is complemented by the photographer's torch which has painted French Ridge Hut's exterior and surrounding tussock

④ LESS IS MORE (MORE OR LESS)

Try filling the frame with your subject.

Don't be afraid to crop off the top of a person's head to get an intimate portrait of their facial expression. Beginners often try hard to get everything into a single exposure, attempting in vain to combine both landscape and portrait genres.

Less is more.

Stick to a single subject; eliminate everything else. Landscape photographer Colin Prior suggests you ask: "What can I subtract from this scene to make it more powerful?"

⑤ SHARP SHOOTING

With landscape photography, you will usually want everything pin sharp, from foreground to background.

If your camera has manual functions, dare to turn the dial from 'Auto' to Aperture Priority (A, or AV on some models). You can then take control of the depth of field (how much of the scene is in focus) by setting the camera to a small aperture between f/11 to f/22. Deliberately choose to focus the camera about one third of the distance into the scene. This is called the hyper-focal length

and will ensure all elements in your photograph have optimum sharpness.

If your camera has an ISO rating, set this to 100 to kill sensor noise, an issue with digital cameras. Choose the largest image size available to get the maximum number of pixels.

Another issue affecting image sharpness is camera shake. I always use a tripod. Failing that, rest the camera on a trekking pole, a rock – whatever is available. Use the camera's Live View mode and, looking at the LCD screen, zoom in close to check for accurate focus.

⑥ PLAN AHEAD

It wasn't raining when Noah built his ark. Likewise, professional landscape shutterbugs plan their shots with military precision, striking when the conditions are favourable. I keep a photography kit bag on hand so I can race out at a moment's notice. Besides my camera, it has a first aid kit, survival kit, map, torches, Thermos, snacks, cell phone, iPod, spare batteries, cleaning cloth and warm clothes.

If it's an evening photo shoot, get to your chosen location an hour before dusk and scout for the best possible composition.

Tools such as tide charts and the weather forecast are invaluable, as is the Photographer's Ephemeris (thephotographersephemeris.com) which will calculate the exact time (and compass bearing) that the sun or moon will set and rise from any given location on Earth.

⑦ PAINT WITH LIGHT

The literal definition of the Greek words photo and graph is to 'draw with light'.

At night you can illuminate your subject with a powerful head-torch. If it's a backcountry hut, a couple of candles can light up the interior while you paint the exterior with light.

It's best to place your camera on a stable tripod at dusk and pre-focus on your subject before auto-focussing becomes impossible. A cable release or remote timing device is essential to avoid accidentally bumping the camera.

Another idea is to shoot the stars with a long exposure to effectively blur them into circular trails. This is a challenging genre of photography with many inherent difficulties to overcome, but the rewards are there for the patient photographer who enjoys a challenge.



Meticulous planning and a series of five-minute exposures went into the two-hour night sky shoot on Nelson's Kaka Hill

MEET
the
REVIEWERS

Pat Barrett
is a long-time contributor to *Wilderness* and author of many tramping books and guides.



Rob Brown
is a Wanaka-based outdoor photographer and author who has been exploring the backcountry for more than 20 years.



Mark Watson
is a *Wilderness* contributor, a climber, trumper, cyclist and photographer.

OVERNIGHT PACKS

Three overnight packs get put through their paces while our First Look Review focusses on a pair of trail sandals that protect toes

MACPAC WEKA 40 \$299.99

A **STURDY OVERNIGHT** pack from Macpac, the 40l Weka will adequately take all you require for a weekend in the hills. With careful packing and attention to what's really needed, you could stretch that out to at least three days.

Constructed with Macpac's Eco AzTec fabric, a certified organic cotton, it feels built to last and to take some punishment.

At around 1200g, it is a great boost to bring your packed weight down on weekend trips. The simplified harness system – a return to basic padded straps and belt with sewn-in shoulder and lumbar pad – and lighter weight fabrics also help keep weight down. This does tend to make the pack a bit floppy, particularly when lightly packed, but if you are trying to save weight it's worth the compromise.

Another feature of the Weka is something that is increasingly being added to packs of this size – a front stash pouch in which you can place your ready to use items. This allows you to keep your sleeping bag and dinner gear in the main pack to access when you get to the campsite or hut. This feature works well, as long as you don't overfill it.

The Weka comes with several other stowage pockets; top flap, map and a front pocket. This last one can be a bit of an issue to manage if you



have stowed too much in the pouch.

Despite my concerns regarding the sewn-in lumbar pads, and thinking I needed to be really careful about how I packed the Weka, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of comfort the pack provided when fully loaded.

One drawback is the rather frustrating main bag straps. These come up out of the stash

REASONABLY PRICED
AND WITH A GOOD
SIMPLIFIED HARNESS

pouch and can be difficult to locate at times and don't work well when the pack is only half full – you just cannot get it to close up tightly. I feel this feature lets the pack down a little.

It's a great tramping pack though for a quick trip to the hills and reasonably priced too, especially when considering Macpac's pedigree.

- Pat Barrett

THE NORTH FACE BANCHEE 50 \$400

AT 50L, THE North Face Banchee packs all the features one expects into an all-round pack.

It's top-opening, with an adjustable harness and has compression straps, ice axe/hiking pole attachments (but no crampon patch), tent pole/waterbottle pockets and a very useful 'overflow sleeve' on the outside. This sleeve can be used for a snow shovel, wet clothes, or clothing shed during the course of a day's tramp. I've used packs with exterior sleeves for many years and find them super useful. The Banchee even has two small external pockets on the outside of the sleeve.

At 1520g, the Banchee fits in the middle of the weight spectrum and I'd describe it as lightweight. Immediately noticeable is the pack's anatomic harness. The thin aluminium tube frame and abundantly padded harness are very comfortable, with an emphasis on ventilation, and give the pack a figure-hugging curved shape: great for keeping it close to your back and aiding balance, but it does make it more awkward

to pack.

Ventilation down the back is maintained by an air space and tightly stretched mesh between the frame tubes. I found this to work very well. The harness length can be fine tuned and the positioning of the padding on the waistbelt, and overall girth, can be adjusted – a great way to tackle the myriad shapes that trampers come in.

A few other details caught my attention: a hydration tube hole and small snack pockets on the waist belt – these are large enough for a compact camera or smartphone.

The Banchee is quite low-volume towards the base, which could (if not carefully packed) give the pack a tendency to be top heavy, and the usual adage applies: pack most of your heavy items close to your back and in the middle third of the pack.

One potential fault is base fabric, which is not double thickness – a feature I consider essential for my packs, especially lightweight packs.

- Mark Watson

FIGURE
HUGGING
AND WELL
BALANCED

GOOD HARNESS,
BUT AN OVER-
ABUNDANCE OF
FEATURES



LOWE ALPINE AIRZONE TREK

45:55 \$329.95

I REALLY STRUGGLED with the design of this pack. It is loaded with features, most of which will sound plausible in a shop, but for me at least half of which were of marginal value in the real world.

The basic sac design is a good example of this. Lowe Alpine make a big deal out of the multiple entry points to the pack. Not only is it a twin compartment pack, but it has three entry points, including a front and rear zipped entry. For wet New Zealand conditions, this means gear will need to be safely packed away in waterproof bags or pack liners.

Because the sac design is compromised by these zips, the pack has a built-in rain cover. Rain covers can be a useful addition to a pack, but I've always thought a design that incorporates it as standard is almost a confession that the basic sac is not sufficiently engineered to prevent water ingress.

The adjustable harness is the main point of difference between this pack and similar sized packs from other manufacturers. Some will find this appealing with its potential to allow most of your back to breathe and avoid the sweat build-up that comes with back-hugging harness designs. This works to a degree, but not well enough to offset the extra complexity of the harness and its lighter construction materials that may not be as durable as simpler systems.

There are plenty of pockets on this pack. Some useful like the side and top pockets. The shoulder strap cellphone pocket I found impractical.

This pack didn't compare well with some other packs of the same size I've tested where the trend is to go lighter and simpler. It tries to deliver too much of what it thinks the customer might want, rather than more of what you actually need, which is a shame because the harness idea has some merit and if it was matched with a no-nonsense sac then it might be a product I would look at again.

- Rob Brown



KEEN NEWPORT H2 \$199.99

LIKE ALL KEEN footwear I have reviewed, this latest offering is a solid bit of gear and looks ready to take on the trail whether it be up, down, or along the flats.

I gave them a work-out over some tracks in Arthur's Pass National Park and on easier terrain in Christchurch.

Pulling the compression cords immediately brings a snug-secure feeling to the feet and coupled with the very robust toe – a solid rubber bumper which extends right across the

TRAIL READY WITH GOOD GRIP AND COMFORT

all important and rather sensitive toe area, sides and top – then you have a 'shoe' that is fit to go.

This point is worth repeating. Many hiking sandals just don't cut it for me because I feel too vulner-

able hitting the trails with exposed toes.

I liked the grip the Newport offered on the tracks I took them on, some of which were quite steep. The outsole is made from Keen's own proprietary material and so long as you don't push them too hard you could do some off-track exploration. I also liked the versatility of the webbing, which can be tightened to reduce foot slip inside the sandal, and conversely loosened when on the flats or just walking to the local café.

They do need a bit of effort to get on and off but that's par for the course for a stiffer, harder wearing sandal which weighs in at 810g/pair.

These sandals are probably not your everyday around the house, garden or beach item during the summer; they are a bit too solid and stiff for all-day comfort at that level. But for the trail they are ready to go and at this price well worth it for a good pair of tough sandals.

- Pat Barrett



WHAT IS WILDERNESS RECOMMENDED?

When our reviewers come across a piece of kit that's so good they would buy it or happily recommend it to their friends, we'll mark that product 'Wilderness Recommended'.

To receive this badge, the item will have met a variety of standards, including some combination of the following: value for money, innovation, construction, comfort, aesthetics, performance and whether it is truly suitable for its intended use here in New Zealand. Those items that don't receive the badge are not necessarily bad – in most cases they will still be well worthy of your consideration – they just don't quite get a perfect score. In some reviews, all items reviewed might get the badge, at other times just one – or none.

Wild Review

ENERGY BARS

Maddy Bellcroft and her taste testers try out a range of energy bars

I have strong memories from my childhood of walking up a seemingly endless track to Temple Basin Ski Field. To keep me walking, my parents hid plastic monkeys beneath rocks beside the track. Each time I found one, I would be rewarded, usually with a chunk of muesli bar.

Today's energy bars have come a long way since then. The standard combo of hard-packed oats, sugar and a sparse sprinkling of choc chips has been superseded with specially-formulated bars designed to provide the right amount of calories and nutrients for people on the go.

This month, my hollow-legged taste testers and I went for a long bike ride in the hills, completing the adventure with an afternoon tea of the following energy bars.



Maddy Bellcroft is a culinary educator and wholefood chef based in Nelson.

BUMPER BAR \$2.50

Company profile Manufactured in Christchurch, these are made by the same folk who make Cookie Time cookies and One Square Meal.

Flavour tested Raspberry and White Chocolate

Servings per pack: 1

Weight: 75g

Energy: 1460kJ, 349kCal

Protein: 4.2g

Carbohydrate: 37.6g

Sodium: 83mg

Sugar: 23.3g

Nutrition and product info The bars do contain gluten, milk, soy and seeds but have no added colours or preservatives, and are marketed as an 'alternative to oat or confectionary bars'. The ingredients include some good whole grains such as oats



and wheat – 28 per cent of the bar. They are the most energy dense and have the highest amount of saturated fat per 100g of all the bars tested.

TASTE TESTERS' VERDICT

"FLAVOURSOME WITH GOOD SIZED CHUNKS OF WHITE CHOCOLATE", "NICE TEXTURE AND BERRY TASTE", "VERY RICH AND BUTTERY".

CLIF BAR \$4



Company profile Marketed as the leading North American energy bar, now in New Zealand with a range of flavours from blueberry crisp to white chocolate macadamia. They are said to 'steadily increase blood sugar levels without creating a precipitous sugar crash'.

Flavour tested Chocolate Chip (nut free, vegan)

Servings per pack: 1

Weight: 68g

Energy: 1050kJ, 250kCal

Protein: 10g

Carbohydrate: 45g

Sodium: 150mg

Sugar: 23g

Nutrition and product info These bars contain 70 per cent organic ingredients and while most flavours contain gluten and soy they are generally dairy and egg free. Ingredients include a mix of whole grains, protein and added vitamins and minerals such as calcium, B12 and magnesium (along with some of their trademarked formulas). The bars are made in America but do not contain high fructose corn syrup. These bars are the highest in protein per 100g of all the bars.

TASTE TESTERS' VERDICT "FIRM TEXTURE, QUITE LIGHT AND DRY, NOT TOO SWEET", "LITTLE HITS OF CHOCOLATE WERE NICE, COULD HAVE A BIT MORE OF A FLAVOUR PUNCH", "COULD BE HOME MADE".

EM'S POWER COOKIES \$4.50

Company profile Created by nutritionist Emily Miazga who has won the Speight's Coast to Coast three times. Her food philosophy is based around creating healthy nutritious food that tastes good.

Flavour tested Chocolate Cranberry Craze (gluten free, '99.9% vegan')

Servings per pack: 1

Weight: 80g

Energy: 1390kJ, 332kCal

Protein: 3.1g

Carbohydrate: 52.2g

Sodium: 138mg

Sugar: 31.2g

Nutrition and product info A good option for gluten free folk, they have 23 per cent dried fruit.



The dark chocolate provides some good antioxidants (this is where the .01 per cent dairy contained in the bars comes from). The bars contain almonds and sunflower oil, which have some healthy essential fats.

TASTE TESTERS' VERDICT "NICE CAKEY AND CHEWY TEXTURE", "LOVED THE CRUNCHY BITS AND RICH OATY TASTE", "FRUIT FLAVOUR WAS QUITE STRONG".



AWAKEN BAR \$3.99

Company profile Made in Nelson, these bars are raw and organic. Awaken set out to bring organics to the masses with good food and design, with bars 'ready for an easy boost for athletes and adventurers'.

Flavour tested Cacao, Date and Hazelnut (gluten free, raw, vegan)

Servings per pack: 1

Weight: 60g

Energy: 972kJ, 232kCal

Protein: 5.22g

Carbohydrate: 38.1g

Sodium: 2.76mg

Sugar: 22.6g

Nutrition and product info These bars are raw, organic and with no GMO ingredients or added



sugar. They are a blend of superfoods such as chia seeds and cacao (unprocessed cocoa), nuts and dried fruit. They are free of colours, preservatives and contain the most simple ingredient list of all the bars. This bar also contains the least saturated fat per 100g of all the bars tested.

TASTE TESTERS' VERDICT "LIKE THE COLOUR, FRUITY AND SWEET", "CACAO GIVES A VERY STRONG SLIGHTLY BITTER FLAVOUR, GREAT IF YOU LIKE DARK CHOCOLATE", "CHEWY AND TART, TASTED HEALTHY".



REEF BAR \$3

Company profile

A family run Nelson business, developed by outdoor enthusiasts for athletes; said to be 'elite nutrition bars for the health conscious'.

Flavour tested Tropical Fruit and Nut (gluten free, dairy free)

Servings per pack: 1

Weight: 60g

Energy: 1030kJ, 246kCal

Protein: 8.34g

Carbohydrate: 38.3g

Sodium: 28.5mg

Sugar: 25.1g

Nutrition and product info This was the hands down winning bar of the taste test, with



all the tasters wanting more.

Each bar uses just 0.4g of brown sugar, and no high fructose corn syrup. Bars are dairy and gluten free so most special diets will be covered. There are no added preservatives. Brazil nuts provide much needed selenium, and the tropical papaya and pineapple give them a different taste to most bars.

Taste testers' verdict "FRUITY AND NUTTY, LOOKED GREAT AND SEEMED THE LEAST PROCESSED", "GREAT AMOUNTS OF NUTS AND SEEDS, WITHOUT LOADS OF CAKEY FILLING", "LOVED THE BRAZIL NUTS".



ONE SQUARE MEAL \$5.40

Company profile OSM was created by entrepreneurs and food technologists, who dreamed of creating nutritious food ready to eat at any time.

Flavour tested Cranberry with Blackcurrant (nut free, vegan)

Servings per pack: 2 bars (one square meal)

Weight: 160g

Energy: 2900kJ, 694kCal

Protein: 16.7g

Carbohydrate: 90.2g

Sodium: 511mg

Sugar: 30g

Nutrition and product info One Square Meals were created to provide 'nutritional perfection' by providing 33 per cent of the recommended daily

intake for energy, protein, fats, dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals. These bars contain the least sugar per 100g of all the bars, are low GI and contain no trans-fats, artificial colours or flavours. The added vitamins and minerals such as B12, calcium and iron provide a good supplemental boost for adventurers.

Taste testers' verdict "NICE BERRY FLAVOUR", "AIRY AND LIGHT, KIDS WOULD LOVE IT", "CRANBERRIES WERE NICE, HONEY FLAVOUR QUITE STICKY AND SWEET".

CONCLUSION

All the bars come in varying sizes so while some of the comparisons here are not weight for weight, the nutrition and energy density between them fall in a very close range. Most of the brands also come in multi-packs, making them a good buy for extended trips.

Overall, the taste testers enjoyed all of the bars, but noted that they wanted most of them to have less sugar and be less 'processed'.

While the individual bars might seem rather pricey compared to a box of muesli bars, they do pack a better nutritional punch and are a good option for on-the-go outdoor snacks.

SERVING IDEAS

✂ Cut the bars up into small pieces and mix with extra dried fruit, nuts and chocolate for some energy dense scroggin.

✂ For an easy breakfast boost, spread the bar with some peanut butter and jam, or crumble over the top of porridge.

✂ Make your own energy balls: blend 1 cup of soaked dates, 1 cup of walnuts and ½ cup of chia seeds, and 1tbsp of tahini with ½tsp of cinnamon in the food processor until mixture comes together. Shape into bars and chill until set.

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT

It's important to get a good balance of energy dense foods (fats, protein, carbohydrates) while tramping.

Carbs will give you 'quick' energy as starches are broken down into sugars. For a slower release of energy, opt for whole grains such as quinoa, oats and brown rice.

Proteins and fats will give you longer sustained energy as they are more intensive to digest. Fats are the most energy dense per weight. Try unsalted raw nuts, avocado and beans.

Nutrition requirements can vary greatly from person to person but use the following as a rough guideline.

▮ 55-70% of calories from carbohydrates

▮ 10-15% from protein

▮ 15-30% from fats

Remember to eat regularly and increase calorie intake as you increase the amount of exercise.

THINGS TO BE WARY OF THIS SUMMER

Summertime and the living is easy, right? We can all be guilty of complacent attitudes from time to time, so **Nathan Watson** gives a few reminders of things to be cautious of this summer.

Flooded rivers

Never be complacent about a river and always stop before you cross. Try to avoid crossing rivers that are in flood, watch out for unsafe characteristics such as discoloured water and flowing debris. River levels can drop quickly so either turn back or wait until the level drops. Always ask yourself 'Do I need to cross?' and if in doubt, stay out.

There's heaps of time in the day right?

Longer daylight hours make it easier to stay out later or take your time getting to your destination. Don't let these extra hours fool you though – plan on arriving at your destination with enough time up your sleeve just in case you get slowed down or things don't go as planned.

Sunburn

During summer, New Zealand is closer to the sun when compared to the northern hemisphere's summer, which accounts for our extreme UV levels. On top of this,

there is less ozone layer to block the UV rays that cause sunburn. Remember to take sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses with you.

Hydration

The human body is around 60 per cent water, so we need to keep it hydrated. Don't rely on feeling thirsty to know that you're in need of a drink, this is the body's way of telling you that you're a little too late and your water levels have depleted. Drink small amounts of water frequently rather than large amounts at one time.

Layers

Summer does not necessarily mean it is always warm; it can still get cold very quickly. Taking spare clothing and wearing layers is just as important as it is in winter. Take enough clothing to keep you both dry and warm. Don't get caught out.

Head torches are a priceless item!

Even in summer, keep your torch in your pack; you never know when you'll need it. The one time you leave it behind you'll want it!

- Nathan Watson is the outdoor land safety manager for Mountain Safety Council



The beautiful long days of summer bring their own risks and dangers

GUM DIGGER'S SOAP

Flowering kumarahou signals the start of kumara planting season and can be used as a soap and brew to relieve sore throats and itchy skin. By **Riki Bennett**

It has long been known that kumarahou has many health benefits. Maori shared their knowledge of the plant with European settlers to cure the many ailments that people suffered from.

To help relieve sore throats and colds, or bronchial complaints, a small amount of leaves were simmered in a pot of water for approximately 30-minutes and the liquid was taken as a tea. It can be quite sour to taste but this can be lessened by adding a little honey.

The liquid can also be applied externally to treat skin itch, cuts and abrasions. The softened leaves can be used as a poultice pack to draw out infection.

The liquid from boiled kumarahou can be stored in a fridge for future use and can last up to a couple of weeks: like ordinary tea leaves the more you use the stronger the brew.

The flower heads lather up in water and Maori used these for washing and to alleviate and cure itchy skin.

Another name for kumarahou is gum digger's soap. Kauri gum diggers used the flower heads as soap to remove gum resin from their hands.

Kumarahou is mostly found growing in poor clay soil along road edges and banks and in sunny spots. It is found from North Cape to Tauranga on the eastern side of the

North Island and down as far as Kawhia on the western side.

- Riki Bennett is a Waitakere Ranges Regional Park ranger and environmental educator



The flower heads of kumarahou can be used as a soap

THREE MULTI-TOOL USES YOU HADN'T THOUGHT OF

Your multitool is a valuable survival aid, writes **Stu Gilbert**

A multitool is a useful item to carry while tramping. If you stick to the basic tools – blade, saw, can opener, pliers and wire cutters – you can do 80 per cent of the jobs required. Here are three ways to use a multi-tool you may not have thought of.

1. SIGNAL MIRROR

Using the handle you can improvise a signal mirror in a survival situation. Hold the handle along the edges and turn towards the sun. Locate the reflection, and hold out your opposite hand to form a V-shape with two fingers. Aim the light at the target by moving the V of your fingers and reflected light towards the target at the same time.

2. SPLITTING WOOD

If you've only got a small knife and need to split wood in an emergency fire situation, your multitool's blade can do the job.

- ① Cut a solid wedge from the side of the log
- ② Cut across the top of the log
- ③ Hit the wedge into the top cut until the log splits

3. FIRE STRIKER

If you've lost your metal striker to your flint, use the rough surface of the nail file to create a spark against the rod to ignite your fire.

- Stu Gilbert is a former air force survival instructor and runs www.sossurvivaltraining.com



Your multitool can help you split wood for a fire

BILLY BREAD



A friend introduced me to billy bread in the late 1980s. Ever since, I have made a point of making it on my trips – the aroma of fresh bread at the end of a hard day's tramp has got to be one of life's great pleasures.

INGREDIENTS

400g high-grade flour

1tbsp sugar

1tsp salt

1tsp sugar

2tbsp milk powder

1tbsp yeast

Variations: add spice, cinnamon and/or dried fruit such as raisins

UTENSILS

1.25l billy

1 aluminium pie dish cut to size

Plastic sheet to knead the dough on

Aluminium sheet

METHOD

Mix dry ingredients thoroughly, not including the yeast and sugar, and pack into a strong plastic bag. In separate bags put the yeast and some extra flour for kneading.

Mix yeast and sugar into

250ml cup of lukewarm water and sit for 5min.

Tip bread mix onto a clean surface and slowly stir in the yeast mix. Knead for 12min, adding extra flour to stop it sticking.

Grease billy and lid with oil to prevent bread sticking. Either put the aluminium pie dish in or under the billy to prevent the bottom of the loaf from burning. Place enough dough to half fill the billy inside, put the lid on and wrap and secure the aluminium sheet to the outside, leaving a 1-2cm gap to allow heat to travel up the side of the billy. Leave in a warm place for 60min. Place on high heat for 1-2min, then low heat to bake for 60-70min.

- Kevin McCarthy

WILDERNESS BOOKS

Going to extremes

By Derek Grzelewski
Bateman \$39.99

FOR A MAN born and raised in Poland, Derek Grzelewski has a beguiling way with the English language, and he certainly knows how to spin a tale.

His latest book *Going to Extremes* is a compilation of 11 articles written for various magazines, none of them unfortunately being *Wilderness*. In fact 'articles' is possibly a misnomer, for these are really stories, well researched, many including the author's own experience and pretty much all put together over a period of time.

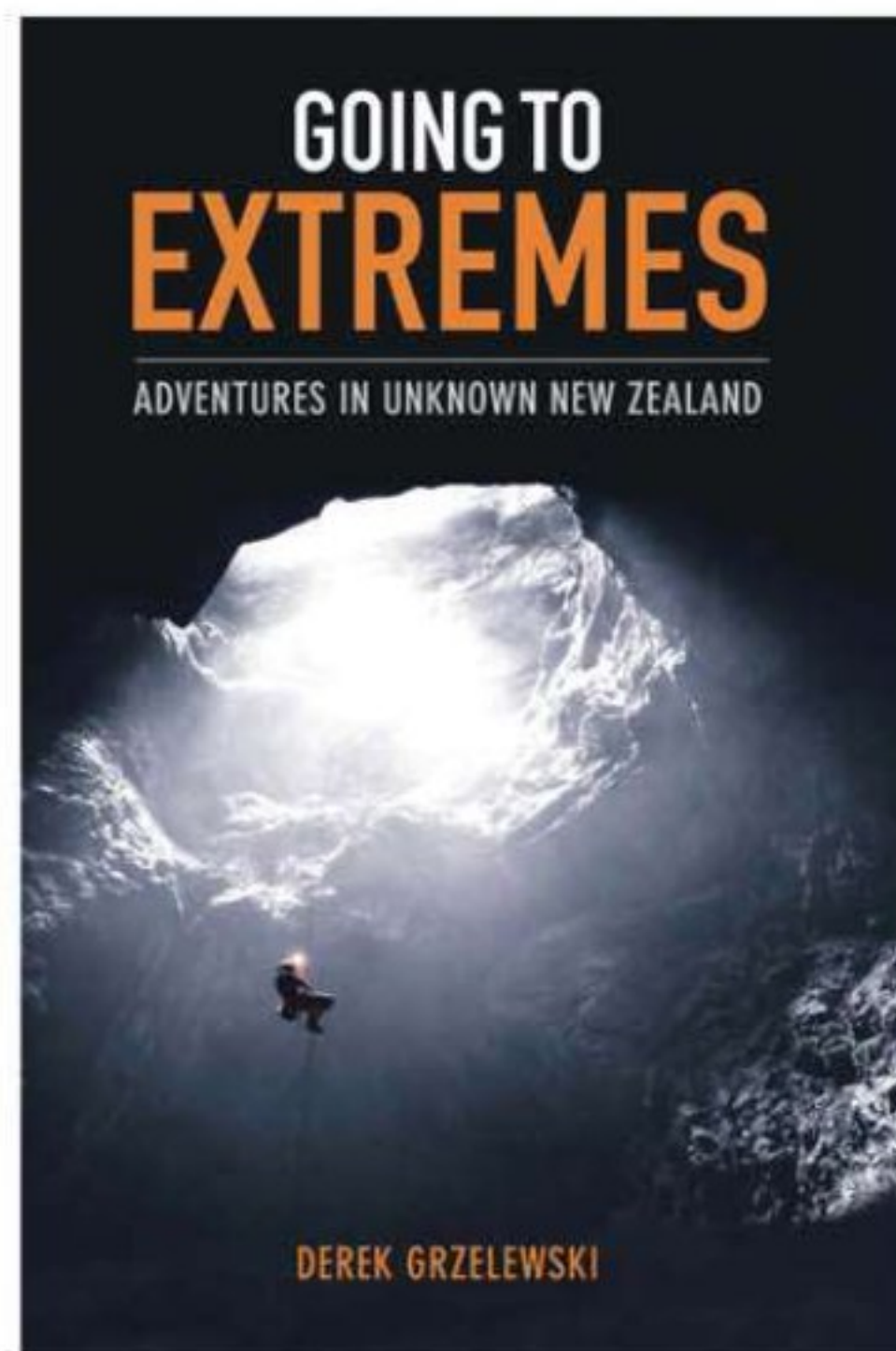
The impression is that Grzelewski didn't sit at the end of a phone line and interview his subjects – he went where they were and talked to them, ran with them, caved, dived, released endangered kakapo, whistled up kiwi and, like any good journalist, raced after fire engines. These stories are a delight and an opening into worlds most of us never experience.

Take the piece about the sinking of the Russian cruise ship, *Mikhail Lermontov*, which struck rocks in Port Gore and sank on February 16, 1986. Although this was big news at the

time, the story settled relatively quickly, possibly because just one person lost their life, from a complement of 738 on board. It seemed a humanitarian success, even though a maritime disaster. But, there was plenty of controversy over how the 20,000 tonne ship steaming at 15kn was handled before the Port Gore rocks tore a 25m gash in its port side, letting in water at an estimated 63 tonnes a second.

Grzelewski revives the whole episode, carefully building suspense – because, of course, we all know the outcome – until impact and he centres his story around a Wellington dive club trip to the wreck. It could so easily be another diving story in murky water to a wrecked ship. But, it isn't. There's the involvement of locals on land, tales from the dive boat's captain, history from the ship's log and the resulting inquiries, all jig-sawed together into an un-put-downable tale.

The other stories, amongst them efforts to save both kakapo and kiwi, caving at Takaka and Waitomo, following Alphonse Barrington's treks in South Westland, trail running, a jarring account of a death in an avalanche and the



'unsung heroes' – volunteer fire fighters – are told with a delightful naivety, and a storyteller's skill.

Derek Grzelewski wrote some of his earliest New Zealand stories for *Wilderness*, but in the end he moved on. It's a pity.

- David Hall

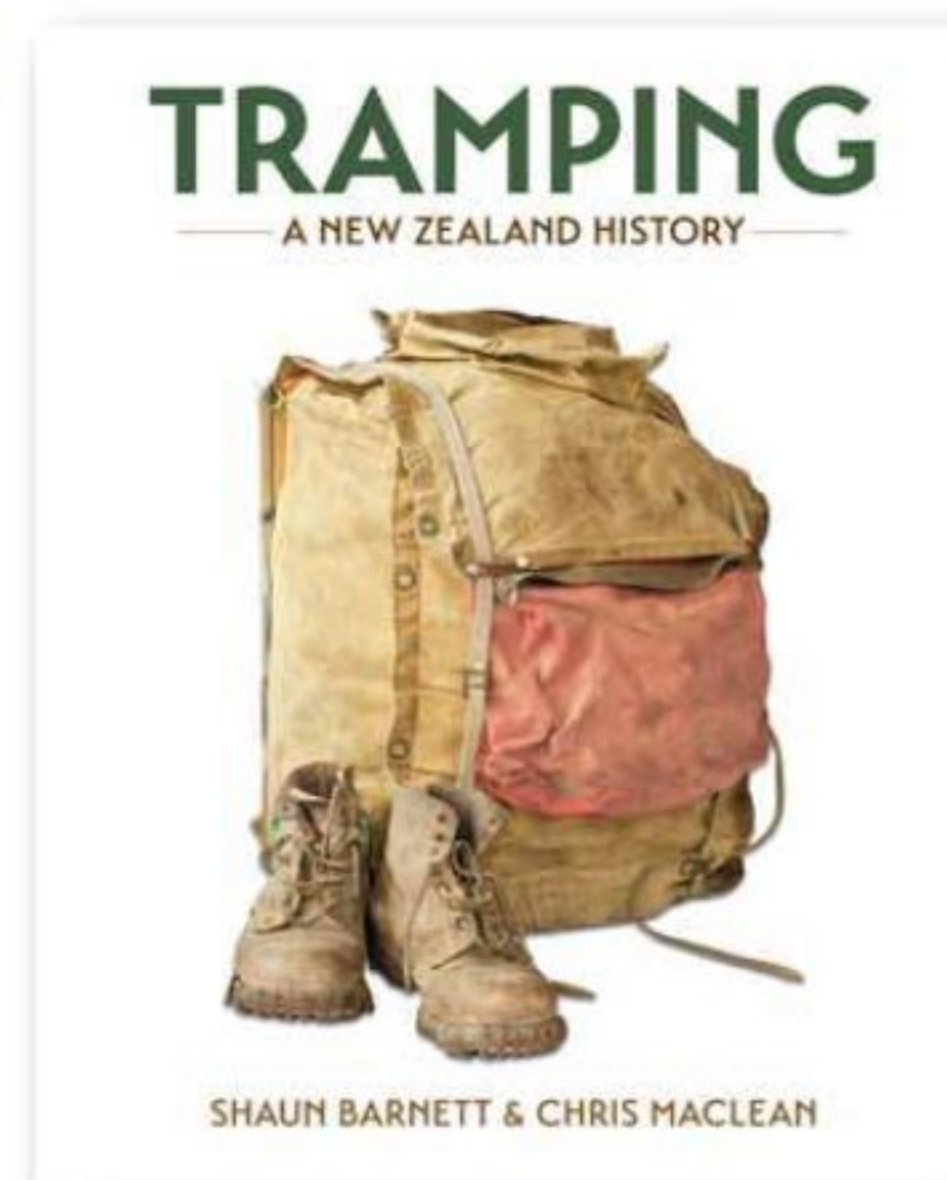
Tramping: A New Zealand history

By Shaun Barnett and Chris Maclean
Craig Potton Publishing, \$69.99

LET'S START WITH something a little disarming: if you've been about in the back-country of New Zealand and feel you know a bit about tramping, it's probably best you don't buy this book for it will undoubtedly open your eyes to what you didn't know you didn't know.

There's another thing too: if you do read it, I'll bet you a year's subscription to this magazine that before you've turned a quarter of the pages, you'll be dusting off your boots, hauling your pack down from the back of the garage and clearing the dining table to spread out a few maps.

This is talk of the past, but this book is a history book. It's about what happened and while droves of *Wilderness* readers are still off the beaten trackers and weekend warriors, with scant thoughts of what has been, *Tramping: a New Zealand history* fashions a skeleton for the dreamy idealism of days in the 'great outdoors', away from urbanisation and all its



vagaries, over which a solid skin of realism can be stitched.

Not to put too fine a point on it, the book tells what those who get out regularly already know, but perhaps can't explain; that being amongst wildness really does clear the mind of the day's – or life's – mundane struggles.

It's not that this book is a philosophi-

cal romp. Rather, it's a good, extremely well researched read about a 'sport' that has held thrall around the world wherever there are forests, mountains and wilderness. Except, of course, people in every other country don't 'tramp'. New Zealanders are the only people using this word for their outdoor excursions and the book's authors explain why.

Pretty much every element of tramping is explored, with informative and often delightful comments from a vast array of people. There's an extensive bibliography and index. This book is close to being – maybe it is – the definitive tract on tramping here. It should find a spot on every trumper's bookshelf.

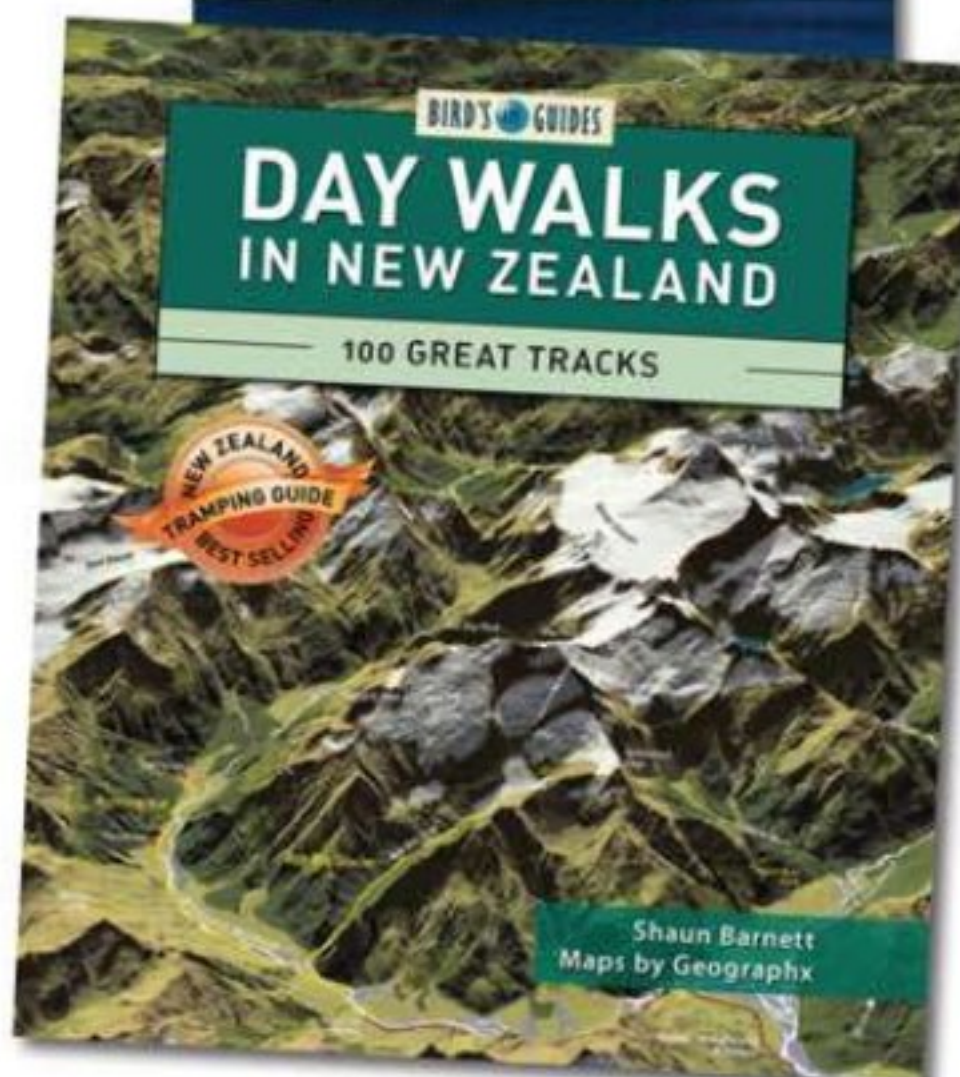
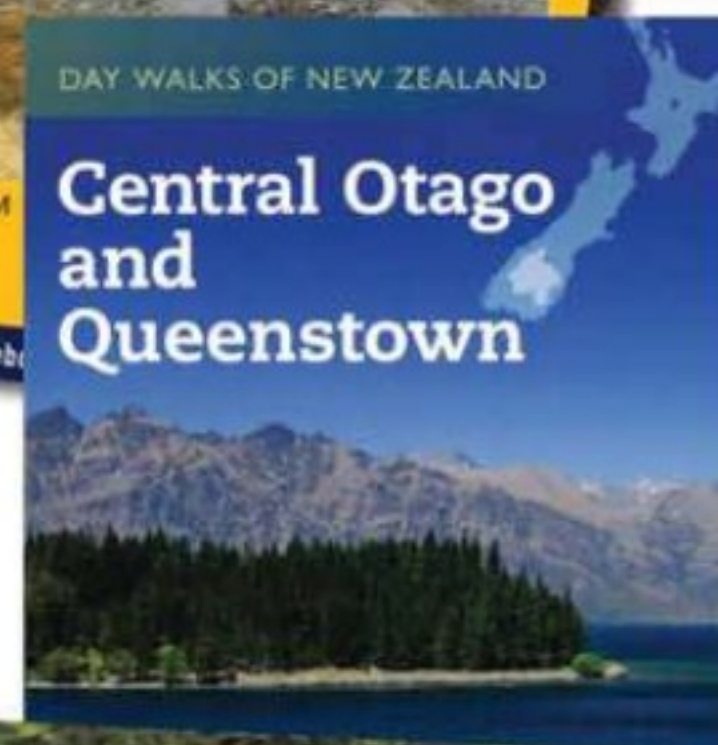
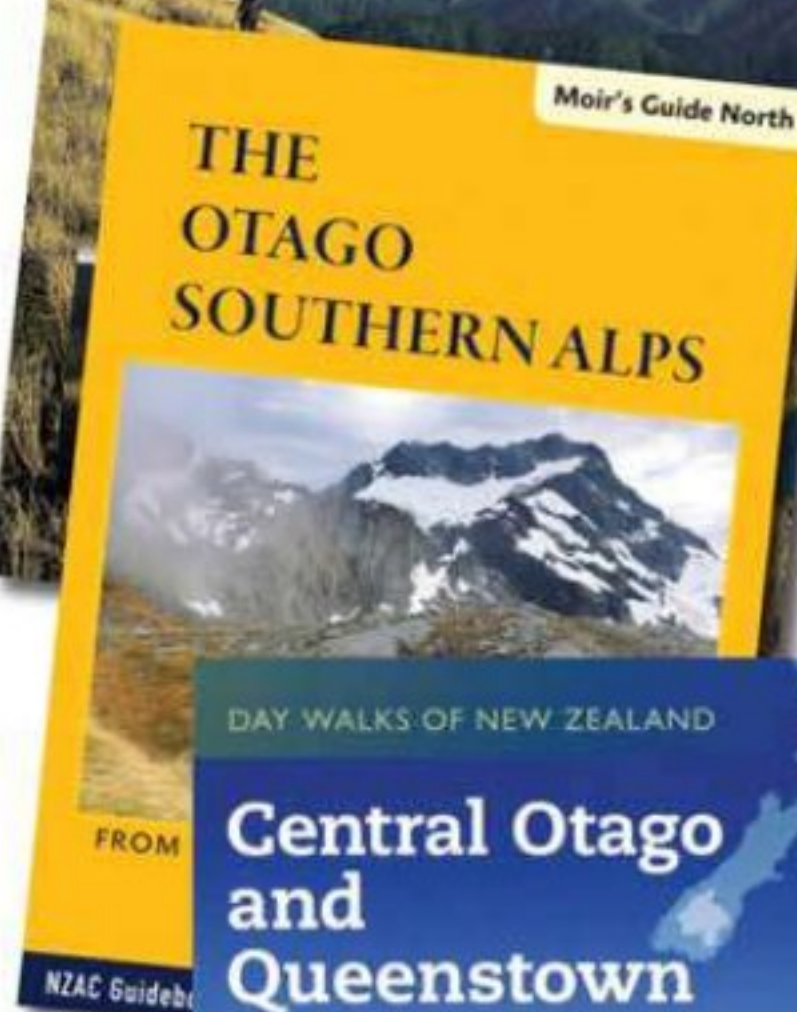
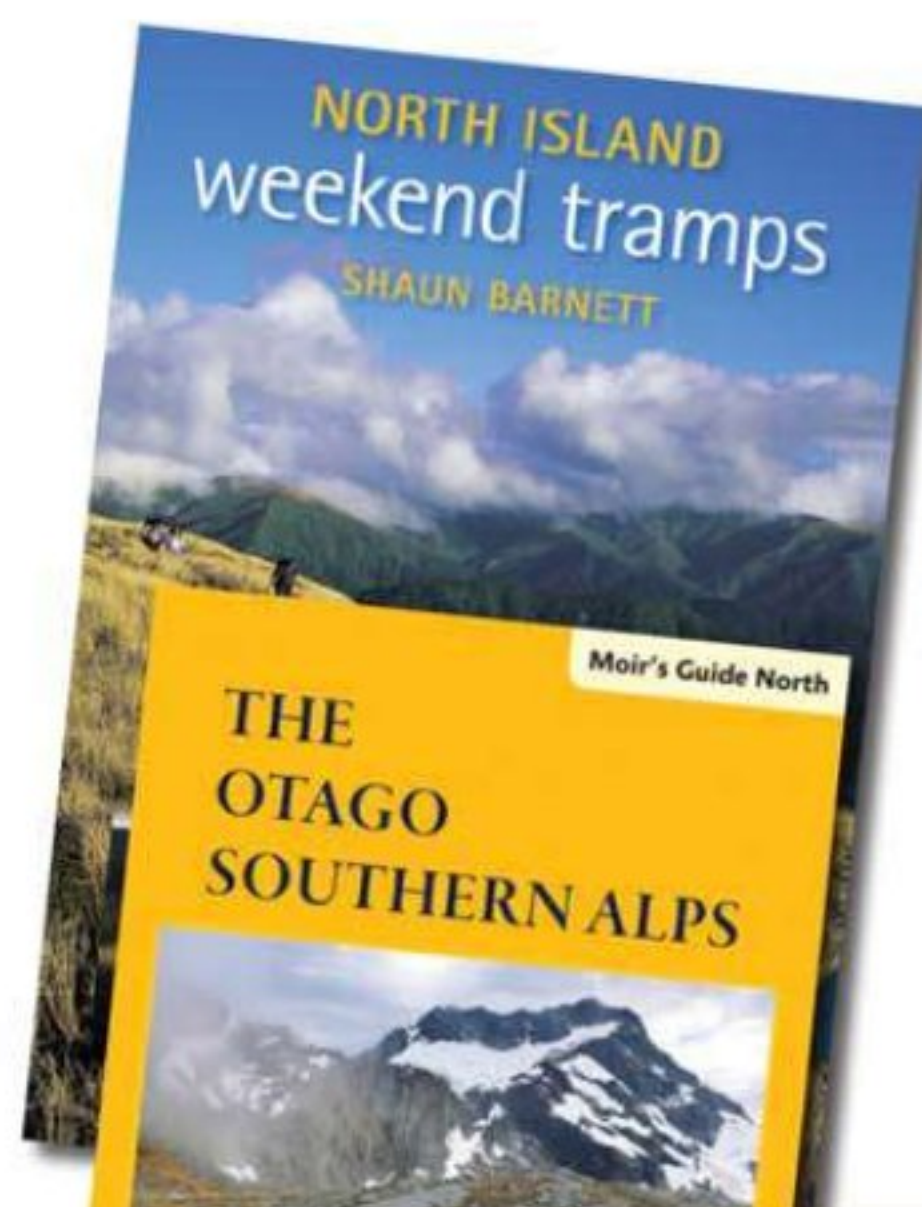
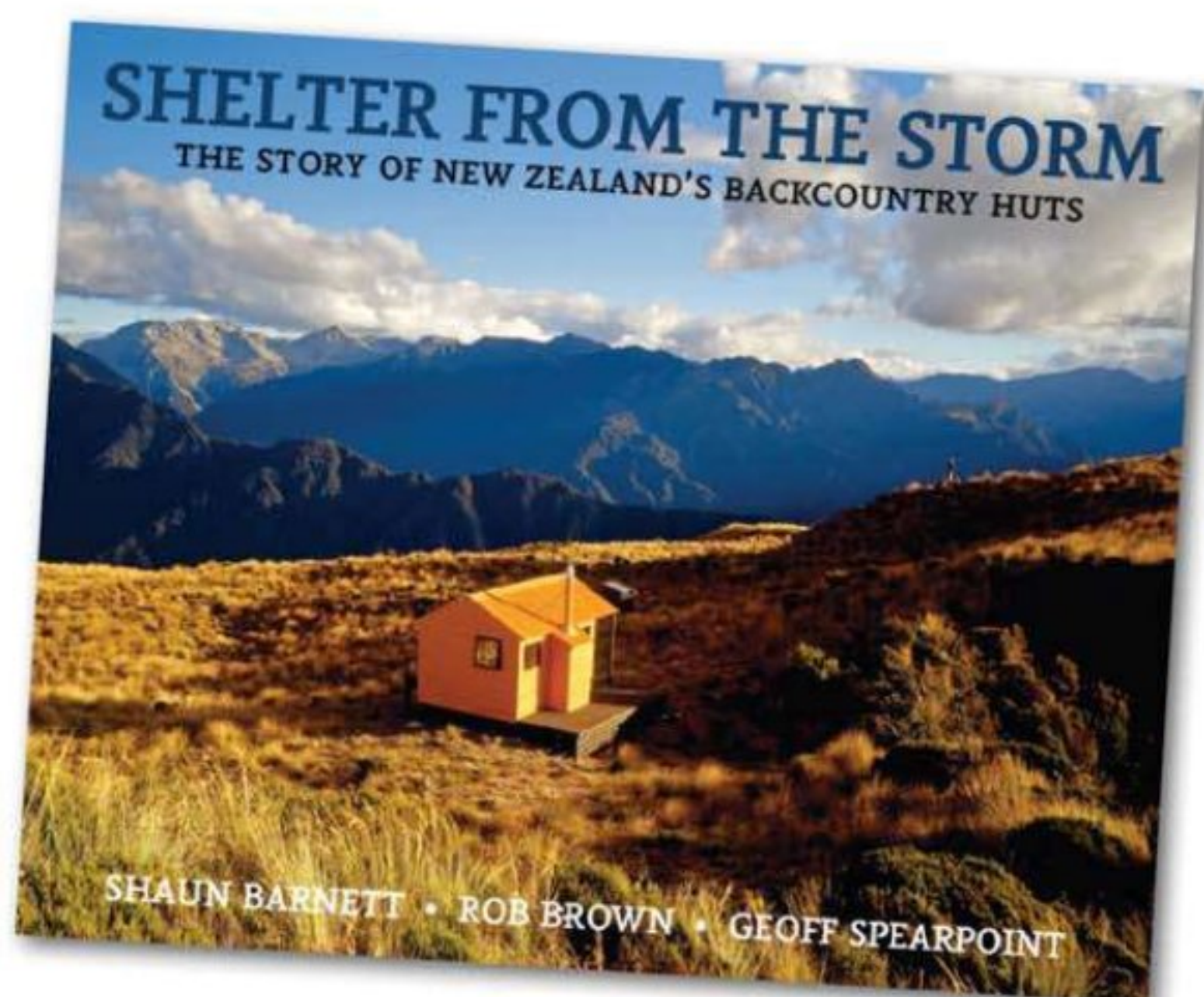
The authors, Shaun Barnett and Chris Maclean know their stuff and we, of course, know one of them well: Shaun is a past editor of *Wilderness* and is currently the magazine's roving editor. Many of the excellent illustrative photographs are his.

- DH

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POCKET KNIVES AND MULTITOOLS

Knives have been an essential tool for mankind for thousands of years. Today's knives are light, durable and often come with multiple tools to help you out of any situation. By **Alistair Hall**

HANDLE

The handle should allow a sure and comfortable grip. This is often achieved through an ergonomic design that naturally fits the palm of your hand. When using the knife or multi-tool, the tools that are not in use should not protrude into the hand. As well as an ergonomic design, some handles offer a textured surface which provides non-slip grip.

LOCKING MECHANISMS

A safety feature built into most multitools and the outdoor-oriented pocket knives is a lockable blade. This prevents the blade from accidentally closing when pressure is applied in the wrong direction. They are easy to operate with your thumb when the tool is held in a natural grip.

BLADE ACCESS

Most multitools allow access to the blades without having to open the tool. One-handed opening is a useful feature on these and the more outdoor-oriented knives, where you grip the tool and use your thumb to slide the blade out of the handle.

SERRATED VS PLAIN BLADES

Most multitools have a straight edged blade and a serrated blade or a combination of the two. Pocket knives like the smaller Swiss Army models will most likely just have a straight edged blade. Straight edges are good for accurate and clean cuts – perfect for those cheese and salami lunch breaks – and for skinning animals or sharpening sticks. Serrated blades are designed for more vigorous cutting and for tackling tougher materials, sometimes even wood. A single blade that combines a plain and serrated edge provides the best of both worlds.



Featured knife: Victorinox Swiss Champ (\$159.99). Distributed by Ampro Sales Ltd, Wellington. www.ampro.co.nz

WEIGHT

THE MORE TOOLS YOUR CHOSEN MODEL HAS THE HEAVIER IT WILL BE. IF YOU'RE BUYING FOR YOUR TRAMPING TRIPS, CHOOSE A KNIFE THAT HAS FEWER FUNCTIONS. IF YOU WANT A MULTITOOL TO COMPLEMENT YOUR TOOL BOX, THEN IT'S A CASE OF THE MORE THE MERRIER.



Leatherman Wave \$229.95

17 tools including four outside-accessible locking blades with one-handed deployment, pliers, scissors and large bit driver for switching bits. All locking blades. 100% stainless steel, leather or nylon pouch, made in USA, 25-year warranty. 241g. www.tightlines.co.nz



Victorinox Swiss Champ \$159.99

Used on NASA Space Shuttle flights, the Swiss Champ has 33 functions including a pressurised pen, saw, scissors, chisel, blades and pliers. 190g. www.ampro.co.nz



Buck 110 Folding Hunter \$149.99

50th anniversary commemorative edition featuring Macassar Ebony Dymondwood handle with brass bolsters, Lockback locking mechanism, 420HC stainless steel blade, 9.5cm blade length, leather belt sheath, lifetime warranty. 205g. www.kilwell.co.nz



Leatherman Sidekick \$109.95

14 tools including spring-action regular and needle nose pliers, screwdrivers, wood/metal file, bottle opener, can opener, one-handed deployment of outside-accessible locking 420HC knife blade and saw, belt clip, made in USA, 25-year warranty. 198.4g. www.tightlines.co.nz



Bear Grylls Ultimate Knife \$99.99

Fixed blade knife with moulded rubber grip, serrated back blade, integrated fire starter with diamond sharpener, emergency micro lanyard whistle, nylon sheath, Priorities of Survival pocket guide. 416g. www.gerbergear.com



Buck 770 Flashpoint \$89.99

Featuring SafeSpin open/close technology, slide lock to lock blade open and close, bottle opener in handle, carabiner clip, serrated blade, 7.3cm blade length. 114g. www.kilwell.co.nz



Leatherman Wingman \$79.95

14 tools including spring-action regular and needle nose pliers, screwdrivers, wood/metal file, bottle opener, can opener, one handed deployment of outside-accessible locking 420HC combo knife blade and scissors, belt clip, made in USA, 25-year warranty. 198.4g. www.tightlines.co.nz



Gerber Suspension \$69.99

Open frame multitool with spring-loaded pliers, Saf.T.Plus locking system, fine-edge knife, serrated knife, rough cut saw and more. Housed in a ballistic nylon sheath. 255g. www.gerbergear.com



Kathmandu Multi Tool 14-in-1 \$59.98

Features 14 tools including long nose pliers, wire cutter, can opener, precision screwdriver and bottle opener. www.kathmandu.co.nz

Opinel French Country Knife from \$19.99

French knives with a classic design virtually unchanged since 1890, as used by Pablo Picasso. Natural wood handle, choice of carbon steel or stainless steel blade. Models 7cm or longer feature a safety locking ring. www.ampro.co.nz



HIKING CLOTHING

Explore the outdoors in comfort this summer with these technical walking clothes

Kathmandu Men's Maio NFZ Pants \$159.98

buzzGUARD insect repelling technology, button front and zip fly closure, belt loops two front and back patch pockets, side leg zipped security pocket, UPF protection, stretch fabric, slim articulated fit. 260g. www.kathmandu.co.nz



Montane Terra Pants \$149

Wind and water resistant Tactel fabric with reinforced Cordura patches on seat, knees and inner ankles, articulated knees, tailored waist with button fastening, zipped fly, removable webbing belt, zipped hand pockets, zipped pull-out security pocket, mesh-lined thigh vents, press stud ankle adjustment, UPF 40+. 340g. www.furtherfaster.co.nz



Montane Fem Terra Ridge Pants \$159

Women's pant with reinforced two way Granite Stretch Dynamic fabric, technical tailored fit, articulated knees, tailored waist with button fastening, removable belt, zipped hand-warmer pockets, internal zippered security pocket, rear concealed Swiss Guide pocket, thigh vents, UPF 50+. 355g. www.furtherfaster.co.nz



The North Face Wmn's Pinecrest Roll Pant \$130

Stretch canvas pants with adjustable cuffs that can be rolled and secured with button tabs, slashed front pockets with self fabric binding, rear patch pockets, straight leg, zip-fly front. 420g. www.thenorthface.com.au



Marmot Women's Lobo's Pant \$119.95

Abrasion resistant nylon, DriClima interior waistband, DWR finish, inseam gusset panel, roll-up cuff with decorative taping, stretch fabrics, UPF 50, zipped side pocket. 241g. www.marmotnz.co.nz



Marmot Cruz Pant \$119.95

Abrasion resistant and breathable nylon, DriClima interior waistband, DWR finish, gusseted crotch, quick-drying and wicking, secure zip back and side pocket, UPF 50. 261g. www.marmotnz.co.nz



The North Face Men's Granite Dome Short \$130

Active fit, cotton face with nylon slickback, welted hand pockets, harness-friendly design, crotch gusset, back patch-on pockets, UPF 50. 240g. www.thenorthface.com.au



Macpac Trekker Shorts \$119.99

Fast drying Pertex Equilibrium fabric with four way stretch, removable belt, zipped hand pockets, gusseted crotch, active men's and women's fit. 115g. www.marpac.co.nz



Marmot Cruz Short \$99.95

Quick-drying woven nylon, UPF 50, abrasion resistant, DWR finish, gusseted crotch, front slash pockets, secure zipped side pocket, brushed tricot interior waistband, made using recycled materials. 187g. www.marmotnz.co.nz

Marmot Wmn's Lobo's Short \$99.95

Made using recycled materials, UPF 50, water-resistant finish, abrasion resistant, DriClima interior waistband, inseam gusset panel, zip pocket. 162g. www.marmotnz.co.nz



Outdoor Research Ferrosi Soft Shell Shorts \$89

Abrasion, water and wind-resistant, stretch-woven ripstop nylon/Spandex fabric, low-profile waist fits under a harness, brushed tricot-lined waistband, button and zip fly, front slash pockets, zipped rear pockets, zipped thigh pocket, gusseted crotch, men's and women's fit. 227g. www.bivouac.co.nz

Kathmandu Wmn's Activist \$79.98

Shorter length hiking short with Scotchguard finish, two front and back pockets, zipped side leg security pocket, zip fly with button closure and belt loops. Breathable, fast drying Supplex nylon fabric. 125g. www.kathmandu.co.nz



The North Face Men's Short Sleeve Pine Knot Woven \$120

Lightweight, breathable plaid shirt with rotated shoulder seams, underarm and side gussets, double chest pockets with button closure, stand up collar and UPF 50. 170g. www.thenorthface.com.au



Kathmandu Men's Kerian Hiking Top \$119.98

No shoulder, under-arm or side seams for reduced chafing, woven panels on shoulders and a back hem for pack carrying. 220g. www.kathmandu.co.nz

Cactus Outdoor Merino Tee \$119

100% NZ merino wool, made and printed in NZ. Men's and women's sizing. 180g (m); 130g (w). www.cactusoutdoor.co.nz



Marmot Windridge SS \$49.95

Quick-drying, moisture-wicking, flat-locked seams, breathable mesh panels, UPF 50, tag-free neckline. 227g. www.marmotnz.co.nz



Marmot Wmn's Essence SS \$59.95

Moisture-wicking, quick-drying, perforated fabric, mesh panels, UPF 30, flat-locked seams, tag-free neckline, shirt tail hem, reflectivity. 233g. www.marmotnz.co.nz



Sharkskin Rapid Dry T shirt \$79

Lightweight, fast drying, SPF 50+ technical T-shirt for during and after watersports wear. Unisex sizing. www.sharkskin.co.nz



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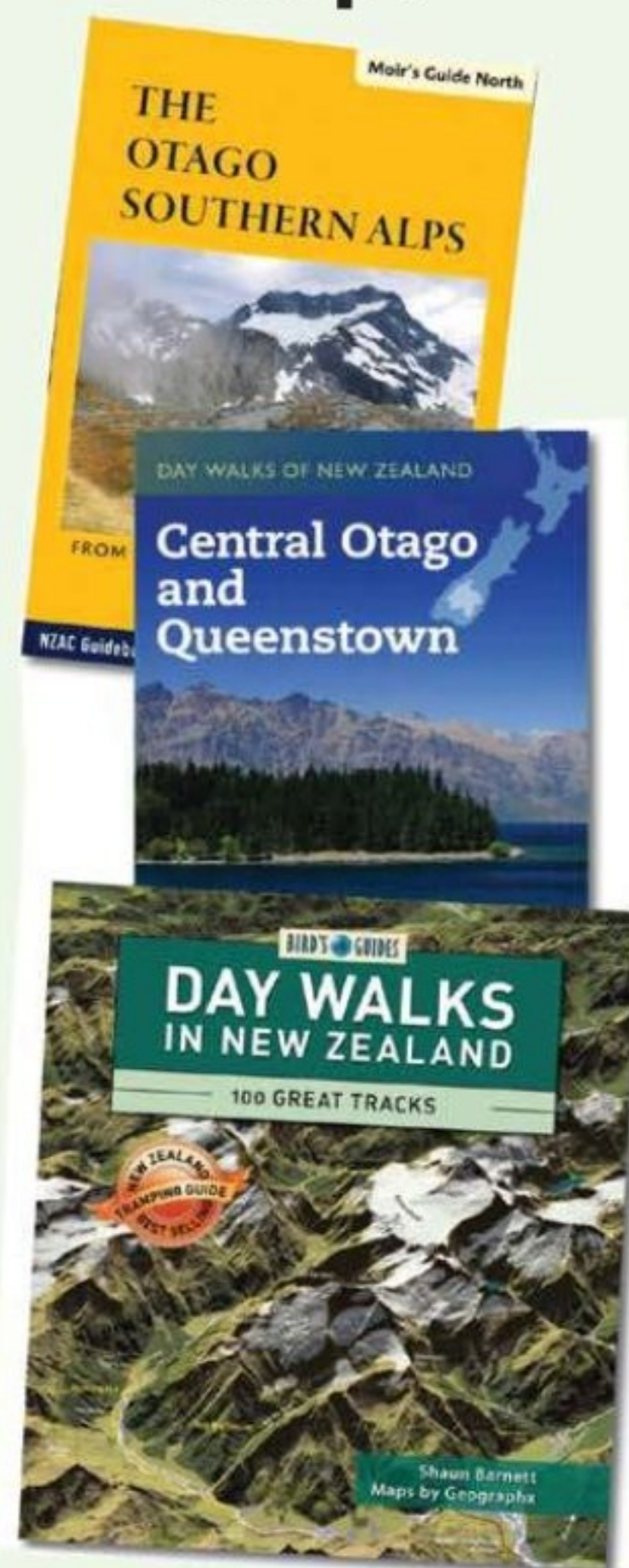
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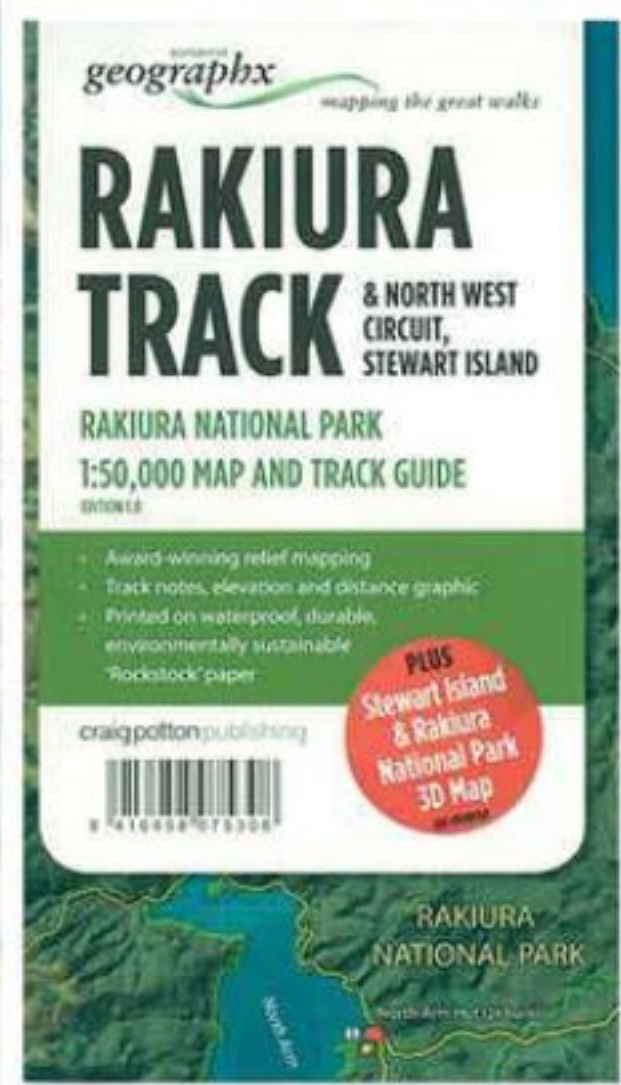
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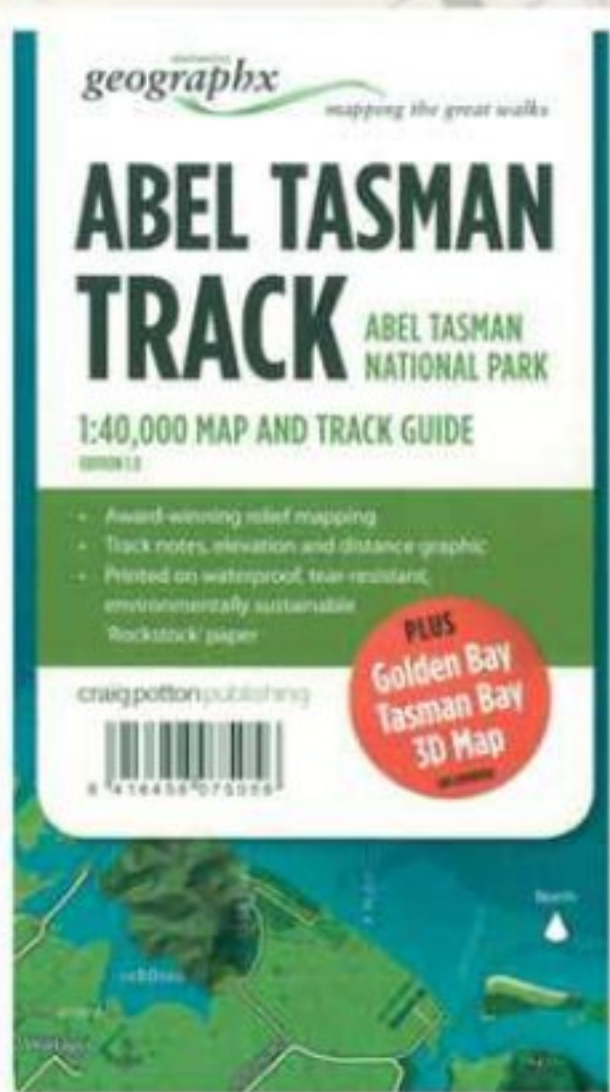
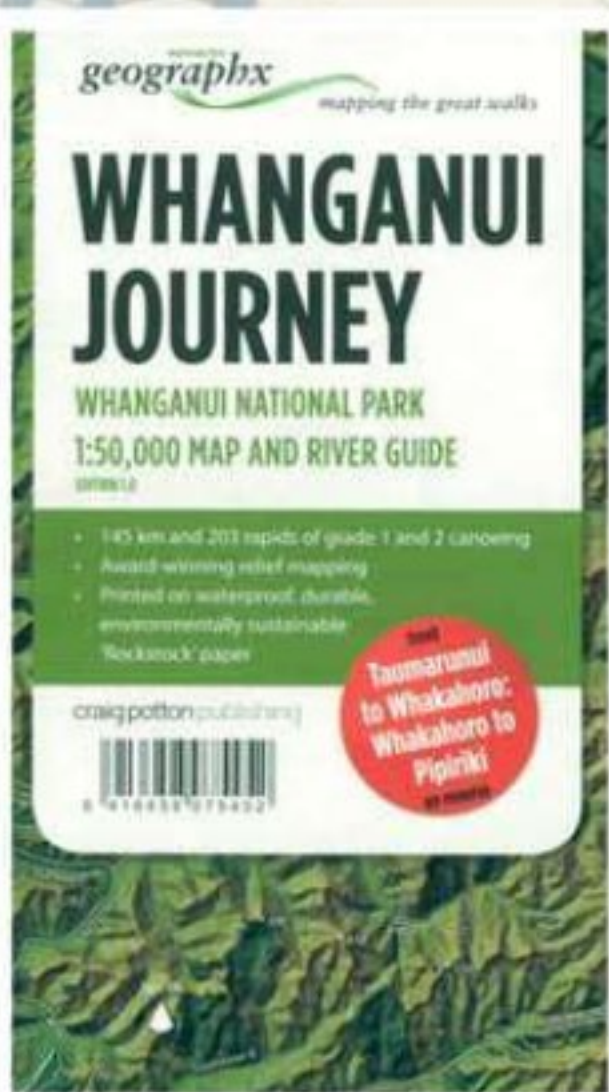
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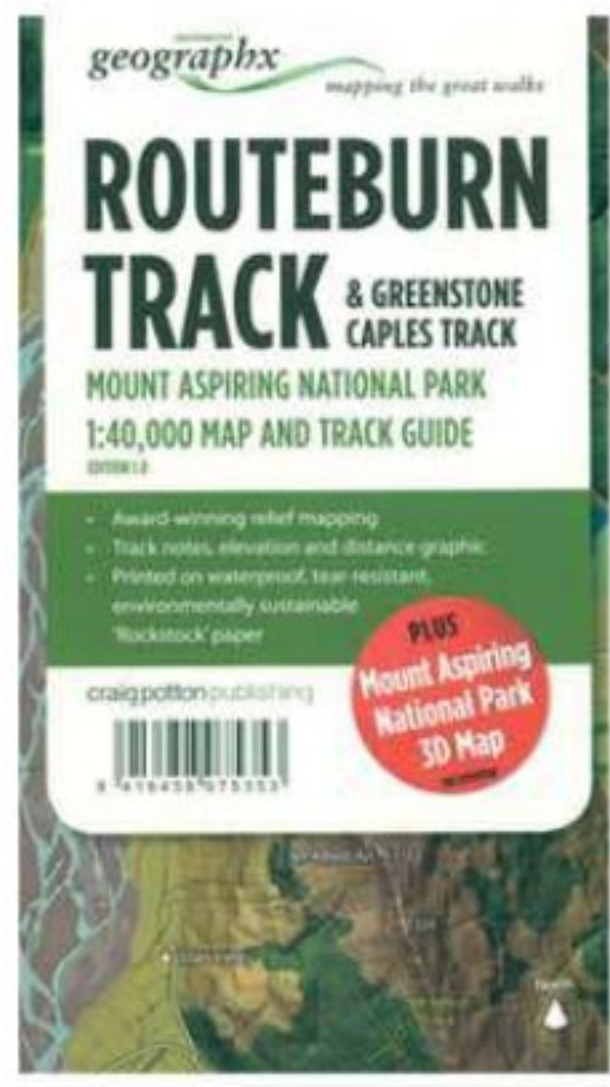
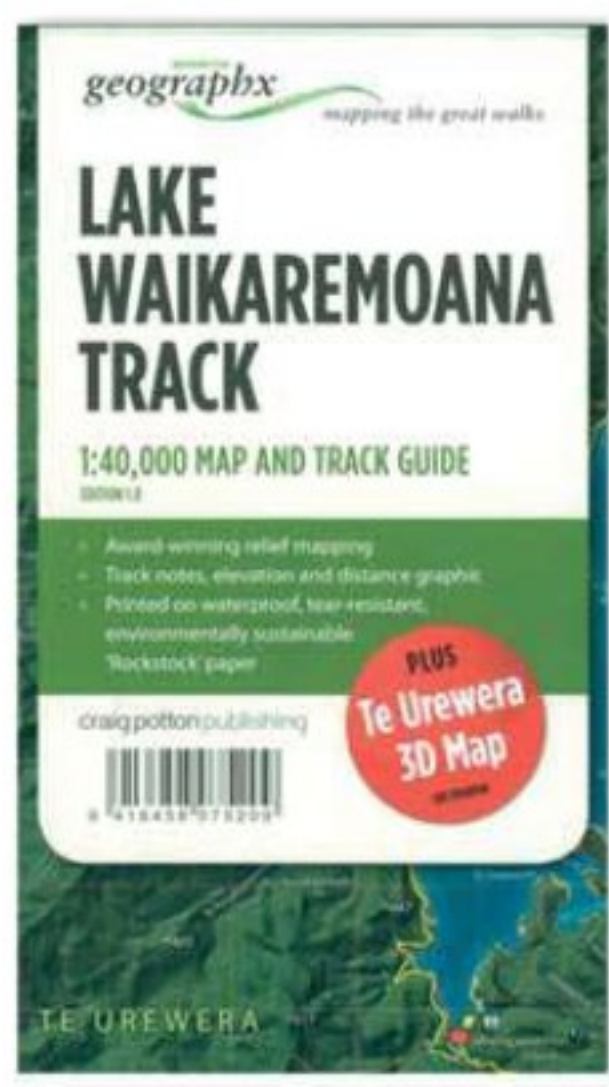
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INTO THE WILD

Mick Abbott ponders the indefinable sense of wilderness

Wilderness is an idea that has gone through many different versions.

To begin with, wilderness was a heathen place, out on the other side. It was godless and full of fear and unspeakable happenings. It was to the wilderness that Jesus was abandoned, a wasteland in which people were lost.

But in Europe, around the late 1700s, ideas of nature began to change. The wild became sublime in an almost sensual way. Nature combined moments of raw pleasure and awe. Mountains became cathedrals, and forests mystical.

Gradually, during the last century, this romantic connection to wilderness has become muted. Instead, wilderness is either a 'last chance to see' attraction for tourists, or a place for recreational escape from increasingly urban lives.

In the 1980s, in this country, a recreational definition of wilderness based on a place meeting set criteria was locked into management plans.

Such wilderness areas have to be remote, and surrounded by an extensive buffer zone. They also have to be large — a minimum of two days to travel across a wilderness area is required. Tracks, track markers, bridges and huts are to be absent, and if present must be removed or not maintained. Vehicle access to their boundaries is discouraged, while

The night sky over Anticrow Hut; a cosmos beyond number and understanding

powered vehicles, boats and aircraft cannot be used in a wilderness area. Commercial activities are also discouraged.

More than 500,000ha of New Zealand's conservation lands are managed as this sort of wilderness. This includes spectacular places like the Pembroke, Tasman and Raukumara Wilderness Areas. There are also plans to introduce new areas.

From wasteland to wonder, and tourism pitch to land management category, in the world of ideas wilderness is a lot like a braided South Island river. It starts on one bank of meanings before moving across to another. At times, these ideas merge before they again split into their ecological, cultural, national identity and social variants.

It seems the idea of wilderness is always on the move. For instance, the former Otehae Wilderness Area in Arthur's Pass National Park, is an amazing valley that was wilderness then wasn't, because the standards deemed it neither remote nor large enough.

My own idea of wilderness has similarly moved. For a while, wilderness was about untracked and remote places – multi-week adventures in the likes of the Poteriteri, Glaisnock, Olivines and Landsborough.

But increasingly I'm finding wilderness in moments as much as particular places. The wild can emerge at the most unexpected places and times. Like being rumbled then drenched in a rapidly building thunderstorm on my way to Pinnacles Hut in the Coromandel, avoiding trails and easy contours to become bluffed on my way back down Mt Binser, and driving over Porters Pass in chains and heavy snow at two in the morning. Each felt wild.

Or a short trip we recently took on a whim, where we walked the few hours to the first hut up the Waimakariri Valley. It's a route I've travelled many times en route to Barker Hut or the Three Pass route to the Coast. But this time, rather than with plans for a long tramp, it was just to head up for a night in the bush.

Hence we were happy to take our time,



Wildness can be sensed in the many braids of the Waimakariri River

take in the river and read in the stones the many courses the Waimakariri takes, and makes, when it's in flood.

It was winter and most of the water was flowing beneath the surface. Yet at times a trickle would emerge from a channel to grow into a stream, before settling again in deep pools. The rocky riverbed undulates, evidence of the force the river has when it's in full flood. In places it's several kilometres wide; a vast valley that contains an infinite number of rocks worn smooth by the unceasing action of flowing water and frozen glaciers.

The scale was mesmerising. Out in the middle of the Waimakariri we were enveloped in a world of stone and a deep sense of the river and this valley's wildness.

We arrived in the dark at Anti Crow Hut, bloody-minded enough to stumble the last twenty minutes rather than use our torches. The hut was a fridge and we huddled in our sleeping bags before we eventually encouraged the frozen wood to thaw then burn.

Then dinner, before stepping back outside to brush teeth and to be immediately silenced and stopped.

Above in a moonless sky was a world utterly beyond comprehension – countless stars, a cosmos that, like the stones on the riverbed, were beyond number and our understanding.

I felt awe as this vast, infinite sea of stars beat down on us. Even in those few spots where we couldn't see starlight it was clear they also were full of stars. But while we were two blips standing by one river, on a small island on a small planet, it did not feel alienating. It felt like we were being drawn into something deeply wild. It was quite some time before I headed back inside.

Perhaps the usefulness of the word 'wilderness' is in being a catch-all phrase for all manner of things natural. As former National Park head Bing Lucas wrote, wilderness "means something different to everyone".

And perhaps rather than getting bogged down with defining what wilderness means, or the types of conservation lands that fit the current criteria, it's more vital to seek out those places and experiences our personal sense of the wild leads us to. On a journey that is taking us into the wild. **W**

RESTING FALCON

This New Zealand falcon (karearea) was photographed in Central Otago immediately after a windstorm. The tired bird decided it was safer to rest than fly away from me.

- Brent Hollow

Camera settings: Nikon D90, 70-200mm f2.8, Exposure 1/2500 @ f/6.3 ISO 500.



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